AN EMANCIPATORY FAMILY THEOLOGY ...TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL MODEL OF INNER-CITY FAMILY PASTORAL CARE IN THE CARIBBEAN

SUBMITTED BY DAVE HAZLE

For the Degree
of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
2003

DECLARATION

I declare that I have composed this thesis and that it is original material not previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

October 20, 2003

Dave O. Hazle

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

CADEC	Christian Action for Development in the Eastern Caribbean
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GSAT	General Schools Achievement Test
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISER	Institute of Social and Economic Research
KMA	Kingston Metropolitan Area
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SDC	Social Development Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

KJV	The Authorised (King James') Version of the Bible (London, Oxford University Press)
NIV	New International Version of the Holy Bible (Colorado Springs, International Bible Society, Revised Edition, 1984)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (Iowa, World Bible Publishers 1989)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for providing the opportunity for this study adventure and for sustaining me through health concerns and other challenges that were encountered over the last four years. In addition, this study project would not have been possible without the help of many individuals, some of whom I wish to acknowledge here.

I am particularly thankful for the help I received from my wife, Maureen. She has been a true partner and has consistently supported me throughout this project. I am very appreciative of her help with transcription, with some of the laborious tasks in the data analysis as well as with editing all of the writing.

Thanks also to the denomination I serve, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Their willingness to approve the necessary study leave and to help secure the funding that was needed, made this study experience in Scotland possible. I wish to acknowledge too the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the Church of Scotland who were my joint sponsors. Additionally, CWM and the Divinity Faculty's Scholarship Committee provided grants that facilitated four months of vital fieldwork in Jamaica.

I have also benefited from the insights and wise counsel of a number of people. I am indebted to Dr. David Lyall and Dr. Marcella Althaus-Reid my supervisors, who provided direction and whose affirmation have kept me going. The consistent guidance of anthropologist Dr. James Carrier was liberally offered to me from the start of this process. His academic expertise, familiarity with the Caribbean and experience in journal editing were invaluable contributions to this project. I am also grateful to Mrs. Pansy Hamilton who was always willing to offer feedback on my research while I was in Jamaica as well as on the chapters of my thesis when I returned to Edinburgh.

Special thanks as well to Drs. David Howard and Beth Cross in Scotland, Dr. Anthony Allen, Rev. Stephen Jennings, Mrs. Janet Brown and Rev. Dr. Roderick Hewitt from Jamaica. Their advice, interest and occasional interventions have been a source of inspiration and encouragement.

I am grateful to all the participants in the case study research carried out in Jamaica and the specialists, listed in Appendix VI, whom I interviewed. Without their input, this thesis would not have been complete and the experience of conducting this research would not have been as fruitful. I must add to these the ministers, churches and community groups I worked with in the case study community. Thanks also to the technicians and support staff who assisted with conducting the focus groups.

Everybody needs a support network and postgraduate students no less. I want to acknowledge the friendship, counsel and encouragement offered by my colleagues and friends at New College especially Dr. Sylvia Klauser and Rev. Lazarus Phiri. Outside of New College, I have been upheld by friends like Helen Perris, who has been my 'mom' in Scotland, and others in our house-group with whom I met regularly for prayer and bible study. Their concern and support have made a difference not only to my studies but also to my life in a distant land away from my immediate family.

I should also acknowledge that parts of this thesis have been accepted for publishing in Black Theology under the title 'Facing the Challenges of Ministry to Families in Inner-City Jamaican Communities'.[1]

This thesis marks the end of a process of study but the beginning of a new chapter in my life and ministry. My hope is that many will benefit from the insights gained over these past years, which are complied in this volume.

---

[1] *Black Theology: An International Journal* provides a forum for theological reflection on issues relevant to Black people across the world. It is published twice annually by Sheffield Academic Press, London.

PREFACE

CALLED TO BE A BRIDGE BUILDER

It is important at the start of this thesis to introduce some of the influences that have shaped my theological formation and which inevitably have become part of the eyes through which I view the world and try to make sense of it. This is particularly important in light of my commitment to an interpretative approach throughout this study and, by extension, the value I place on the subjective perspective of people. Indeed, the very notion of a contextual theology, which this project seeks to develop, challenges the positivistic notions of objectivity in theological reflection and affirms the importance of the subjective viewing point of the individual. I am seeking in this preface to 'declare my hand', to make plain some of my theological presuppositions without any pretence to be representative of all theological perspectives, Christian or otherwise. In describing my theological 'roots', I hope also to 'preview' what I have come to see as an underlying theme that characterises my sense of call to ministry and also why I see this study project as part of the unfolding of that call.

The underlying theme of which I speak is 'bridge builder'. In simple terms, this is one who creates connections between separated ideas, perspectives and people. This characterising theme has emerged out of a personal life journey with many apparently conflicting threads of experiences and theological perspectives but which I hold together as complementary partners. Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger in her book, *Theology and Pastoral Counselling*, through the concept of asymmetry offers insights into how it is possible to have apparently incompatible ideas from totally different disciplines co-existing in the mind of one person.[2] It is this asymmetry at work in me, which I consider to be key to my disposition, and call to be a 'bridge builder'. What then are some of the experiences and theological perspectives that are shaping my outlook? What have been the poles between which I have journeyed?

---

[2] D. van Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counselling* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), pp. vii-xii.

To begin with, I was christened as a Roman Catholic and did my early schooling at Roman Catholic institutions. Yet today I am a parish minister in a reformed protestant denomination. So my journey first of all has taken me through different Christian traditions.

Secondly, evangelical as well as liberal strands have influenced my Christian theological formation. On the one hand, much of my spiritual nurture, after making a Christian commitment during my teen years, was through my involvement in evangelical church and para-church organisations. There the most significant emphases for me were on the necessity of personal faith for salvation and the attendant evangelistic imperative to declare the claims of Christ and His work on the cross. Also significant was the importance of the Bible as the revealed Word of God and an authentic and authoritative standard for Christian belief and practice.

On the other hand, my three years of theological training at a relatively liberal theological institution, introduced me to a more critical approach to the Bible and to more contemporary trends in Christian theology such as feminist and Black theologies. It was during my training too, that I found resonance between some of my social and political views and Latin American theology of liberation. What is more, my training sought to prepare theologians and ministry practitioners who were more contextually sensitive and grounded in Caribbean reality. It was during that time that I was introduced to the notion of a Caribbean theology, which articulated the struggle of the Caribbean Church for liberation from the Eurocentric Christianity that had been inherited from the colonial-minded missionary church that brought Christianity to the region. Moreover, Caribbean theology grappled with the question of what should constitute a relevant mission agenda for the Caribbean Church in light of its peculiar historical, socio-economical, political and cultural experiences.

Thirdly, I have journeyed between different academic interests. For much of my later years of secondary school and for my first degree, the natural sciences were my primary areas of training. However, curiosity with the social sciences led me occasionally to meander into that area during my university years. Living in Jamaica during the 1970s and 1980s, at a time of nationalistic zeal and socialist experimentation, fuelled much of this curiosity. The government of the day promoted a national cultural identity and a heightened consciousness about social and

economic injustice locally and internationally. As an impressionable adolescent, I became interested in social and political issues. Three years after completing my natural science degree, I returned to university to pursue studies in yet another area, that of theology. So my journey has taken me through natural and social scientific as well as through theological academic interests.

Fourthly, I had the experience of ministry in different social contexts. Whereas my earliest involvement in parish ministry took place in an affluent middle-class parish, my most recent assignment was in the heart of the inner city. This contrasting ministry exposure allowed me to experience first-hand the gulf between the socio-economic poles in Jamaica and gave me an insight into the varying needs of each context. What is more, my ministry experience has been shaped by the dual roles as parish minister and high school chaplain.

My theological orientation has continued to be nurtured by both evangelical and liberal interests which I constantly struggle to reconcile. I have also maintained a lively concern about social and political issues; always seeking to work out what contribution the Church community is being called to make to public life.

This personal journey, briefly outlined here, has weaved within me a theological outlook with Roman Catholic and Protestant strands, with evangelical and liberal threads, with spiritual priorities alongside social and political interests. So these influences, among other things, are at the root of my theological presuppositions. It is the coming together of apparently conflicting poles that has led me to see myself as a 'bridge builder'.

A bridge that is built across a large river facilitates the easy movement of people to and from either side. Without the bridge, people on either side must survive without the benefits of what the other side has to offer. It is this bridge building ministry to which I feel myself called; bridging the gap between humankind and God, Church and community, young and old, evangelical and liberal and First World with developing world. It is a call to break down walls of partition and foster reconciliation, to be the advocate and ambassador for the powerless, to teach and empower the weak and unlearned, to heal the sick and broken in heart and spirit and to facilitate resolution of internal and interpersonal conflicts. All these constitute the

call to be a bridge builder and this study is part of the fulfilment of that call. This understanding of myself has been a significant motivation behind my selection of this research topic. For in undertaking this research, I am attempting to build bridges between the Church in Jamaica and the needs of families, as they exist in Jamaica's inner city today.

ABSTRACT

This study explores pastoral care for Caribbean families within inner-city communities. It utilises a Caribbean theological methodology which, like other theologies of liberation, is praxis centred and contextual. As such, the thesis begins with a socio-historical background to the region and to the patterns of family present there. Moreover, this research takes as its aims the development of a contextual family theology and a model of family pastoral care. The study is presented as illustrating the movement, in Caribbean theology, from a critical mode to a more constructive and strategic mode.

Using Jamaica, the largest of the English speaking Caribbean islands, as a unit of research, it makes use of a qualitative case study approach to explore the perceptions of family in an inner-city community in Kingston, Jamaica. The data collected, with the help of focus groups and individual interviews, allowed for a comparison of family experiences and perspectives between residents and people attending churches in the community. From this data, information was obtained about family in general, family life in the case study community, views on the Church and perceptions of God's vision of families compared with the Church's response to them.

The thesis demonstrates how these insights were brought into dialogue with others from theological and non-theological sources. Arising from this conversation, it then proposed a contextual family theology. This theological framework adopts an emancipatory paradigm, which is central to Caribbean theological methodology. Moreover, it laid the foundation for a model of inner-city family pastoral care, which the study went on to outline.

The thesis is set out in five chapters. The first chapter, ***Chains and Freedom***, gives a background to the Caribbean and of family life in inner-city communities. Chapter two, ***Moments in Theology: A Methodology for a Contextual Theology***, explores the theological methodology that underpins this study. It outlines an interpretation of Caribbean theological methodology and discusses the details of the case study approach used as part of the analysis of the context. The third chapter, ***Let the People Speak***, is a presentation of the findings from the case study. In the fourth chapter, ***Freedom to Be…An Emancipatory Family Theology***, a theological framework for families and praxis with them in the Caribbean is presented. Finally in chapter five, ***The Whole Church for all Families***, a model of family pastoral care for inner-city families is offered. It ends with a call for the churches in the region to embrace the need to see family ministry as a current mission priority for the well-being of Caribbean people and the advancement of their societies. To this end, some areas for further research in family pastoral theology are identified.

CHAPTER 1
CHAINS AND FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION

In this opening chapter a background to the context of the study is given. Defining the Caribbean's boundaries as a geographical, political or ethnic entity has often been a source of much debate among scholars, not least because of the region's history as contested colonial 'possessions' between rival European countries, which included England, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark. In this thesis, the Caribbean refers to the region comprising the archipelago from Cuba in the north to Trinidad in the south and mainland states of Belize, Guyana and Suriname of Central and South America. Colonisation, by various European nations, has resulted in a region of cultural and linguistic pluralism that defies any simplistic notion of homogeneity and in which each country has a distinctive character. Former New College scholar, Kortright Davis, has alluded to the plurality that exists in the Caribbean when he says:

> *It must be borne in mind that there are many Caribbeans in the region. The traditional distinction between the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles can be further expanded by the distribution of the four major language areas-French, Spanish, Dutch, and English. Communication among these four areas is not as easy or active as their geography might suggest. Because each of the European colonial powers held its territories in a strong grasp, the various inhabitants lived in mutual suspicion and ignorance of each other's circumstance within the region.*[1]

In the same way that the Caribbean Sea is both a source of separation of one country from another as well as a common unifying feature of the region, so too the history of colonialism has created both differences as well as commonalities between countries. The most significant commonality has been the experience of large-scale migration of mainly Africans to the region as slaves and later of East Indians and Chinese as indentured labourers in the post-slavery period. The result has been the emergence of

---

[1] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 6.

a people who are 'not merely European, African or East Indian per se,' but who are distinctively Caribbean with a rich cultural and ethnic heritage.[2]

In light of this diversity, it must be said that the focus of this study is on the Afro-Caribbean people in the English speaking countries. More particularly it is on Jamaica, the largest English-speaking Caribbean Island, which is ninety per cent Afro-Caribbean. In this chapter, the backdrop against which this study takes place will be sketched. This will be done in four sections.

Section 1.1 gives a brief history of the region, highlighting its characteristic tension between chains and freedom.

Section 1.2 introduces the reader to inner-city life in Jamaica, for it is with families in this setting that this study is concerned.

Section 1.3 draws upon the wealth of social science research to describe the main patterns of inner-city family life and focuses on some of the historical and contemporary factors influencing these patterns.

Section 1.4 discusses the development of a Caribbean theology. Against this background, the focus of this theological enterprise on an emancipatory paradigm will become evident. Moreover, the necessity for reflection on family pastoral theology will be argued and the need for such a reflection to mirror the emancipatory paradigm will be proposed.

---

[2] N. Titus, "Our Caribbean Reality (1)," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, H. Gregory, (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), p. 59.

SECTION 1.1 THE CARIBBEAN... TENSION BETWEEN CHAINS AND FREEDOM

CHAINS AND FREEDOM IN COLONIALISM AND SLAVERY

The recorded history of the Caribbean has been characterised by the struggle between domination and the quest for emancipation, between chains and freedom. This is typified in Jamaica's history. When the Spanish, as part of their fifteenth century expansionist enterprise, claimed the island of Jamaica, they found a peaceful, indigenous group traditionally thought to be the Arawaks but who are now known to be the Tainos.[3] The Spaniards, who had brought with them Catholicism wrapped up in dreams of conquest and discovery of wealth, set about 'christianising' the Tainos and totally dominating their civilization. The ill-treatment of the indigenous people was to eventually lead to their extinction. Small numbers of Africans are thought to have been a part of the Spanish expeditions to the West Indies but with the genocide of the indigenous people, increasing numbers of Africans were sought and brought to the island as slave labour. By the time the English challenged the Spanish settlers for the control of Jamaica in the 1650s, Caribbean historian Patrick Bryan estimates that:

> *African slaves constituted close to half of the population of Jamaica. .... African slavery was the backbone of the Spanish Jamaican pastoral economy, which exported lard and hides and produced small quantities of sugar for local use.*[4]

The British eventually took control of the island in 1655 and continued with the pursuit of wealth where the Spaniards had left off. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, but increasingly during the course of the eighteenth century, the British fully adopted the system of African slavery for the labour-intensive sugar cultivation. This became a significant source of British wealth.

---

[3] The term 'Arawak Indian' has been used traditionally to refer to the pre-historic people encountered by Columbus when he arrived in the Greater Antilles. Within the last two decades there has been a trend towards the term 'Tainos'. For more, see B. Reid, 'Tainos not Arawaks: The Indigenous Peoples of Jamaica and the Greater Antilles', *Caribbean Geography* (Kingston, Jamaica) 5, 1 (1994), pp. 67-71.

[4] P. Bryan, *Inside Out and Outside In: Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 2000), p. 9.

Without the indigenous inhabitants, a new social dynamic evolved between two migrant groups of people, the conquerors (the British) and the conquered (the Africans). The promotion of both sugar and slavery meant that by the middle of the eighteenth century, there were more Africans than British on the island. This mix of cultures took place asymmetrically with the balance of power in the hands of the British planter class. This was to be the backdrop against which the emerging Jamaican society was to play itself out. Over a period of approximately 200 years, it was to give rise to a diverse society stratified along racial and class lines but brimming with its own unique cultural features.

> *Out of this vortex, there emerged two major processes which influenced the nature of the society then and... it continues to this day. One result was the creolization of the society, consequent on the cultural and sexual contact between the Europeans and Africans. The result was the creation of a new class of people, the mulattos, with a status, which though still subservient to the planter, gave them some power over the powerless blacks, causing tension at best and hatred and bitterness at worst. Although the process produced an amalgam of two cultures, neither purely African nor purely European, it sowed the early seeds for the new culture, which would ultimately manifest itself with its own music, language and other forms of expressions.*[5]

Resistance by the Africans to European oppression was a constant feature of this interaction. From the time of the English conquest of the island they had to contend with a group of slaves who had been freed by the Spanish when they themselves fled the island. These Maroons, as they were called, organised themselves into a fighting force and refused to submit to their conquerors. These courageous Maroons, whose numbers were periodically increased by runaway slaves, were a constant threat to the English planters and the prosperity of the plantations. There were also persistent struggles by the slaves for freedom from the tyranny of chattel slavery. As Beckford and Witter point out in their book, *Small Garden... Bitter Weed: Struggle and Change in Jamaica*, 'slave resistance took many forms: sabotage, withdrawal of labour…

---

[5] L. Jones, *The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1995), p. 18.

protest in words and in songs, escape and outright rebellion.'[6] These became an increasing nuisance to the planter class in the years leading to the eventual emancipation of the slaves. A case in point was the Sam Sharp Christmas revolt of 1831. It was the largest slave revolt in the island's history involving all the western parishes and resulting in not only the loss of the sugar harvest but more than one million pounds worth of damage.[7] This, along with the activities of the Christian missionaries (mainly Moravian and Baptist) in the British Caribbean, conspired with a strong abolition lobby in the British Parliament and changing economic interests in Europe to bring about emancipation in Jamaica in 1834. This was to be inaugurated with a period of apprenticeship before full freedom in 1838.

CHAINS AND FREEDOM AFTER EMANCIPATION (1838-1960s)

The emancipation of slavery brought physical freedom for the slaves but failed to deliver economic or political liberation for them. The transition from slavery to freedom was not easy. It was at times traumatic and there were many periods of great hardships for the majority of the ex-slaves, many of whom had no land of their own and who continued to be dependent on the sugar plantations for paid work and lodging.

One of the significant initiatives in the immediate post-emancipation years was the Free Village Movement that sought to support the resettlement of the ex-slaves. This initiative spearheaded by the Baptist church, helped the ex-slaves acquire their own land and enabled them not only to take greater charge of their destiny but also to play an increasing role in the changing economy of post-emancipation Jamaica.

---

[6] G. Beckford and M. Witter, *Small Garden... Bitter Weed: The Political Economy of Struggle and Change in Jamaica* (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 18.
[7] M. Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1998), p. 148.

> *As the freed slaves settled on their own land, whether in the Free Villages or outside, an independent peasant class began to be established. By the end of the nineteenth century, this peasant class had significantly shifted the island's dependence on sugar to a more diversified economy, so much so that the peasant output rose from 11 per cent of exports in 1854 to 75 per cent by 1890.*[8]

The economy was not the only thing becoming diversified. Following emancipation, Chinese, East Indian indentured labourers and freed blacks were brought in to supplement the workforce on the remaining sugar estates. Many stayed on to open small businesses and shops, becoming part of the general society. In the mid nineteenth century came the Syrian and Lebanese merchants who settled in the Caribbean and significantly influenced the economy. Amidst these liberating changes however, there were still signs of bondage in the social, political and economic realities of the people.

Socially, the experiences of slavery and colonialism have contributed to the establishment of a post-colonial society that was fettered by class divisions along racial lines. On the one hand, there were the middle and upper classes comprised of the white descendants of the European planter class and the Syrian and Lebanese merchant class. On the other hand, the poorer working class was made up mainly of the descendants of the ex-slaves. Working conditions of the lower class were poor and opportunities for employment were limited. The inevitable result of this state of affairs was periodic labour unrest as workers struggled for better conditions. These unrests also showed the determination of the majority of the people to achieve political representation, which they were effectively denied.

Politically, the governance of the affairs of the people in post-emancipation Jamaica was not the prerogative of the people but that of a distant colonial power. The primary agency of government on the colony was the Assembly, which was made up entirely of the landowning planters, yet even so they were always subject to imperial policy. The former slaves and their descendants were even further removed from power. For them, voting rights were not granted until 1944, more than one hundred years after

---

[8] L. Jones, *The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1995), pp. 20-21.

emancipation. It was not until 1962 however, that the struggle for self-determination would lead to political independence from British colonial rule. This came after a century of considerable development within the political landscape of Jamaica that saw the establishment of local labour unions and political parties which were to become important vehicles in the pursuit for self-government.

Another legacy of the colonial era has been a political culture and institutions that display ambivalence between authoritarianism and democracy, between chains and freedom. On the one hand, Jamaica has a Westminster parliamentary democracy inherited from Britain, but on the other hand, as some Caribbean sociologists have identified, leadership operates with a culture of domination akin to the colonial master.

> *Authoritarianism was perceived to be essential by and became the habit of, those who were in control, and so, whether in legal, racist or paternalist guise, it became the central and traditional feature of the dominant political culture...The physical and verbal abuse of women and children, which is not only widespread but is also widely accepted as being part and parcel of normal relations between men and women, and between adults and children, is therefore an important aspect of the deeply rooted authoritarian political culture of the Caribbean.*[9]

This authoritarianism has shown itself in the strong charismatic leadership that is a feature of some areas of political life in Jamaica. This has often fostered blind loyalty to political parties, which has in turn compounded social divisions along political lines. In a context of limited resources, this has often meant that the politics of favourites has exploited attitudes of dependency especially among the poor and thwarted the more comprehensive liberation based on equal opportunities for all. Support for political parties has become for some a means of survival rather than a choice of effective governance.

Carlene Edie explores this 'clientelist' nature of Jamaican politics in her article '*From Manley to Seaga: The Persistence of Clientelist Politics in Jamaica*', in which she

---

[9] N. Bolland, *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), pp. 11-13.

suggests that 'democratic politics in Jamaica is maintained by state-controlling party elites who grant patronage resources in exchange for party support.'[10] Authoritarianism is also manifested at the local community level in leaders commonly referred to as 'dons' who tolerate no rivals and display considerable power that is often enforced by fear.

Independence has done much to foster national pride and a sense of identity as a society. Moreover, an expanded role of the state that has accompanied independence has meant that the majority of the people have gained more in terms of educational opportunities, improved living conditions and access to social services.[11] Nevertheless, the quest for full emancipation persists.

Economically, colonialism inevitably led to dependency on the 'mother country' which was fostered by the hierarchical relationship between the empire and the colonies. In addition, Britain remained the primary market for exports from the colonies. This dependency persists today in various types of foreign aid and preferential access arrangements for Caribbean products into Britain. Furthermore, the realities of the global economy have always favoured the domination of the smaller, poorer players by the larger ones.

Jamaica has its own currency with a liberalised exchange rate as well as potentially vibrant mining, agriculture and tourism sectors; however, true economic freedom has been considerably retarded by economic dependency and vulnerability to the vicissitudes of the world market. What is more, the proximity of the region to North America has meant a constant susceptibility to its influence. Indeed, in many ways, America has served as a replacement for Britain as a proxy colonial power. In spite of the political independence enjoyed by most of the Caribbean therefore, they still experience much of the effects of colonialism.

---

[10] C. Edie, "From Manley To Seaga," *Social and Economic Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 38, 1 (1989), p. 1.

[11] L. Jones, *The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1995), p. 26.

> *The Caribbean today has become a proving ground for various experiments in neo-colonialism transnational corporations, transistors, Japanese vehicles, tracking stations, satellite dishes, foreign television, military exercises, millions of tourists and off-shore banking schemes.*[12]

Like Lazarus called back from the dead, the Caribbean is still encumbered with 'grave clothes'.[13] In more recent times, the effects of high external debt and the attendant problems of structural adjustment programmes have resulted in increased hardship for the most vulnerable sections of the population. In spite of the ongoing struggle of Caribbean people therefore to freely determine their own destiny, there have been chains that have persisted in their social, political and economic affairs.

> *Caribbean people have been as active in shaping their history in the twentieth century as in the nineteenth, yet still they do not shape it in circumstances of their choice. The burdens of history weigh heavily on Caribbean peoples, as the social and cultural legacies of colonialism and slavery continue to shape their societies and the ways they think about them.*[14]

Probably the most significant manifestation of the chain-freedom tension however is evident in the psyche of the Caribbean people, an aspect that warrants a closer look.

---

[12] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 3.
[13] St John 11: 44 (KJV). The biblical texts quoted or referred to normally are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise stated.
[14] N. Bolland, *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), p. 1.

CHAINS AND FREEDOM IN THE AFR0-CARIBBEAN PSYCHE

Psychologist Carl Jung's concept of a collective unconscious gives some credence for the notion of a collective psyche, that is, an awareness or way of thinking which is common to a whole group.[15] It is in a similar vein that one can speak about an Afro-Caribbean psyche. A history steeped in oppression and domination racially, culturally, economically, politically and ideologically has greatly affected the psyche of Afro-Caribbean people. Imagine being forcibly taken from your home and all that is familiar, separated from your cultural setting and familial connections. You are taken under inhumane conditions to a strange and distant place where you are systematically robbed of your human dignity and indoctrinated into the culture of your oppressor. That is what happened to the estimated 11.7 million slaves who arrived in the Americas over the period of the slave trade that ended less than two centuries ago.[16] This scale of forced mass migration and domination of a powerless majority by a powerful migrant minority is unique in the colonized world. Reflecting on its uniqueness, Caribbean theologian, William Watty notes that:

> *The history of colonialism in the Caribbean represents such an extreme case of manipulation and disorientation as to make it almost a freak-occurrence, unparalleled in history. It is a kind of cruel irony that Western culture and Western Christianity, which were part and parcel of the process of disorientation and dehumanisation, became a substitute for the indigenous which they conspired to destroy....*[17]

What this has induced in the Jamaican psyche is a crisis of identity, insecurity about worth and ambivalence between esteeming what is Caribbean and esteeming what is Western. As Kortright Davis states:

---

[15] For more on Jung's concept of the collective unconscious see C. Jung, Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 9, Part 1, 2nd Ed., Princeton University Press, 1968.
[16] P. Bryan, *Inside Out and Outside In: Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 2000), p. 2.
[17] W. Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981), pp. 5-6.

> *That which was foreign was good; that which was local was not good. So people were alienated from their natural cultural endowment (race, colour, language, belief systems, relationships, preferences, entertainment and leisure, work schedules, family mores, personal aspirations) and from their rightful corridors of power, influence, opportunity and social access.*[18]

The struggle to be free from the debilitating effects of history upon the identity and consciousness of Caribbean people is aptly depicted in the words of world famous Jamaican reggae singer, the late Bob Marley, 'emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds.'[19]

One manifestation of this mental slavery is the psyche of low self-esteem, which some Caribbean thinkers have often pointed to. Theologian, Ashley Smith for example describes the Caribbean personality as, 'characterised by a passive dependency, a sense of inferiority both on the individual and corporate level, and a negative self-regard....'[20] Similarly, political scientist, Carl Stone considers 'low black self-esteem'[21] as one of a number of core values and derived behaviour norms found in Jamaica.

What is paradoxical is that Caribbean people have demonstrated considerable resilience and assertiveness in the face of hardships. Consider for example the fortitude often displayed in the face of the threat of earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanic activities that are often visited upon the region. Also, their assertiveness have often placed them in the forefront of liberation causes on behalf of the African Diaspora. For example, the Civil Rights Movement in America found much of the inspiration from the philosophy of Jamaican philosopher, Marcus Garvey who had emigrated to the United States. Similarly, Claude McKay was a Jamaican who also emigrated to America and became a key figure in the flowering of artistic expression among African-Americans, often referred to as the 'Harlem Renaissance'. It was he who was the author of the poem, *If We Must Die*, used by Sir Winston Churchill to

---

[18] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 83.
[19] B. Marley, Redemption Song.
[20] A. Smith, *Emerging from Innocence* (Mandeville, Jamaica: Eureka Press, 1991), p. 10.
[21] C. Stone, "Values, Norms and Personality Development," (Kingston, Jamaica, Unpublished Paper, March 1992).

rally the British forces in World War Two. The songs of Bob Marley and reggae music in general became a rallying cry for the liberation struggles in southern Africa and beyond. In the field of sports, the West Indies cricket team dominated the game on the world stage for almost two decades in the nineteen seventies and eighties. Jamaica has also consistently produced world-class athletes in a range of sports and was the only tropical country to enter a team for a Winter Olympics. Watty captures this paradoxical feature of Caribbean personality when he says:

> *Caribbean personality-at one and the same time brilliant and unstable, free and irresponsible, ostentatious and insecure, promising much and achieving little, shooting to the top like a meteor and then, in the next moment, plunging downwards into disgrace. He does not believe in himself nor does he believe in others like himself...*[22]

The realities of the Caribbean experience have given rise to a cultural quest for fuller emancipation. One's experience of family life can either reinforce or help to overcome the debilitating effects of social and historical factors on the psyche. Theological reflection must therefore take cognisance of this quest as well as the possible role of family life in it. It is for this reason that this thesis promotes family empowerment as a strategy for a fuller experience of emancipation in the Caribbean context.

This study is based on the analysis of family life in an inner-city community in Jamaica. A brief look at the process of urbanisation and the features of inner-city life today might therefore be helpful.

---

[22] W. Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981), p. 6.

SECTION 1.2 'BIG YARD'...A PEEK AT JAMAICA'S INNER CITY

In this section, the process leading to the formation of Jamaica's inner-city communities will be briefly described and some of their features highlighted.

As mentioned earlier, the period immediately after slavery was particularly unsettled. After emancipation, as opportunities for work on the plantations contracted and indentured labourers were brought in, many of the ex-slaves migrated in search of employment. Much of this migration was to neighbouring territories and later to North America and was often in response to American investment in other parts of the region. The construction of the Panama Canal is a case in point.[23] At the start of the 1920s however these opportunities began to decline rapidly causing an acceleration of internal migration. Kingston increased in population from 37,300 in 1871 to 63,711 in 1921 and to 110,083 in 1943. This was exacerbated by the rapid population growth caused by improved health.[24] According to Bolland this situation:

> *Created increased pressure on resources, particularly in rural areas where an increase in the density of the population often resulted in further fragmentation of small land-holdings that were already inadequate... increasing numbers of people sought a better livelihood by migrating from rural areas to the towns or overseas, particularly when the economy stagnated and then collapsed in the interwar period.*[25]

What is equally significant about the internal migration is that it tended to be to urban centres which offered not only the prospect of jobs with higher wages for workers, but also better educational opportunities for their children. The result was the proliferation of various working class communities characterised by poverty, overcrowding, as well as poor housing and living conditions. This process of urbanisation has given rise to the features of inner-city communities, which are not without their effects on inner-city family life.

---

[23] See N. Bolland, *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), pp. 156-162.
[24] Ibid., pp. 156-162.
[25] Ibid., p. 157.

Housing arrangements, for example, have been one of the features of inner-city life that has impacted family life. It might be sufficient to note here that the need to maximise accommodation capacity gave rise to the housing pattern commonly referred to, in the inner city, as the 'big yard'. This consisted of various housing units on a single plot of land all owned by the same owner and often occupied by different members of the same extended family. Indeed, the 'big yard' is integral to family life in the inner city and throughout the study, participants made reference to this term as they described the living arrangements of families in the community being studied.

The 'big yard' facilitates mutual support between residents in the yard but it can also be a potential source of domestic conflict. Sociologist, Erna Brodber suggests that the 'yard' or 'big yard' has come to represent 'a geo-social entity of special significance in the lives of some urban Jamaicans.'[26]

Another significant feature of inner-city life that affects families has been the consistently high levels of unemployment. As the urban drift has continued over the last century, large numbers of mainly unskilled young adults have increased the ranks of the unemployed. Unemployment and poverty have also meant that many of these communities have become vulnerable to opportunist politicians eager to create enclaves of power. The result is that social cleavages along political lines have become a way of life in Jamaica's inner- city communities. The emergence of so called 'garrison communities' is an indication of this. In 1997, a national committee chaired by the Political Ombudsman, the Hon. Justice James Kerr, was established to look into the problem of 'political tribalism'. In the report of the committee, it was noted that 'garrison communities' are created in part by 'the development of large-scale housing schemes by the State and the location of the houses therein to supporters of the party in power.' [27]

In addition, some of these communities have also become centres for drug dealing operations and other crimes. In these settings, the use of violence for political as well as criminal ends has become endemic. In a 1996 report of a government-sponsored

---

[26] E. Brodber, *A Study of Yards in the City of Kingston*, Working Paper (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1975), p. 1.

[27] J. Kerr, Report of the National Committee on Political Tribalism located at http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/politics/index.html.

research into *Violence and Urban Poverty in Jamaica: Breaking the Cycle*, it was noted that 'violence is high in Jamaica, especially in poor urban neighbourhoods where many forms of violence - interpersonal, domestic, gang, political, drug - are ever present in daily life.'[28] As the report suggested, politics and crime are not the only cause of violence. At the time of the report, at least forty per cent of the murders resulted from domestic disputes. It was not uncommon for wider gang warfare to be the ultimate result of minor personal disputes.[29] As this study will confirm, violence and crime in urban communities can have an impact on family life.

These then are some of the features of inner-city life, a context in which family life faces peculiar challenges and in which many of the patterns of union formation, fertility and family structure inherited from slavery have been reinforced. It is these features of family life and the factors that have shaped and presently influence them that will be looked at in the next section.

---

[28] J. Armstrong and J. Lichtenstein, Violence and Urban Poverty in Jamaica: Breaking the Cycle, 1996, p. iii.
[29] Ibid., p. 7.

SECTION 1.3 DAD ON THE MARGIN, MOM IN THE MIDDLE

FEATURES OF JAMAICAN FAMILY LIFE PATTERNS

A family has been variously defined as 'two or more persons living together and related by blood, marriage or adoption'[30] or as 'a group of people living in the same house or household.'[31] Alternatively, a 'family exists when people related to one another by blood or the sharing of a home consider themselves resources for one another on a more comprehensive basis and at a higher degree of intensity than they consider other people.'[32] Admittedly, the precise definition will vary from one culture to the next and from one period to another. Chapter four will offer a definition based on an analysis of the perspectives of people in the context. However, in this section, with reference to the over fifty years of family research conducted in the region, some of the common patterns of Afro-Caribbean families will be described.[33]

The term 'family patterns' or 'patterns of family' is used to mean the typologies and practices associated with family life. It is not limited to descriptions of structure or family forms but is also intended to include gender dynamics, reproduction and union patterns as well as parenting practices. Afro-Caribbean families demonstrate patterns that are common throughout the region and consequently researchers have tended to look at them as a regional phenomenon.[34] This means that studies of the wider Caribbean region bear relevance for the Jamaican situation and vice versa. For the most part however, this study is centred on the Jamaican situation.

---

[30] Ministry of Education, *Health and Family Life Education Curriculum Grades 7-9* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1998), p. 9.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Polack quoted Ibid., p. 76.
[33] See for example C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996);
B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), pp. 1-45; E. Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me*, (Second Edition) (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1999), F. Henriques, *Family and Colour in Jamaica* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953) and M. G. Smith, *West Indian Family Structure* (Seattle, USA: University of Washington Press, 1962).
[34] The titles of some of the seminal works looking at family research in the region illustrate this point. These include *West Indian Family Structure* (1962) by M. G. Smith; *Kinship and Class in the West Indies* (1988) by R. T. Smith, *Family in the Caribbean* (1996) by Christine Barrow.

Jamaican family patterns show some variation along lines of class and ethnicity. The middle and upper classes tend to conform to the traditional European family forms characterised by legal marriage unions followed by childbearing. This is true too of the small pockets of the population that are from European, Chinese or East Indian ethnic origins. For the largely Afro-Jamaican working class - the focus of this thesis - the main patterns may be described under the headings:

1. Sexual Attitudes and Relations
2. Union Types and Household Classification
3. Patterns in Gender Roles
4. Parenting Practices

SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND RELATIONS

Many in the inner city see sex as a natural urge that should not be repressed and it is commonly held that suppression of sexual urges causes ill-health which can lead to infertility. Moreover, in his article, *Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans*, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of the West Indies (UWI) points out that, 'not only is sexual activity natural, it is unnatural not to have had a child, regardless of one's union status.'[35] Although not unique to the region, it has been true for some time in the Caribbean that sex is seen by many people to be independent of marriage, love or the need for prior commitment. There is therefore no necessary connection made between sexual relations and a committed union for the purpose of family formation. One consequence, when children result from such relations, is the disconnection of the role as husband from father roles on the one hand, and wife from mother roles on the other. This disconnection has given rise to the colloquial expressions 'baby-mother' and 'baby-father' to identify persons who have mothered or fathered a child.

---

[35] B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), p. 6.

Sexual experimentation by many Jamaican children begins fairly early. By age ten, fourteen per cent of the boys have had their first sexual encounter.[36] Most boys have had their first sexual experience by age fifteen, and most girls by age seventeen.[37] Moreover, much of the early sexual activity takes place in casual relationships in which there is no emotional attachment or mature commitment. This places a high proportion of female adolescents at risk of pregnancy.

> *Since the 1970s, the proportion of births by adolescents has been approximately 30 per cent of total births... Every year, more than 14,000 babies are born to teenagers under the age of 19, just under one-quarter of all births in Jamaica. Among these teenagers, more than one-fifth are having their second child.*[38]

Many of these are unplanned pregnancies. In 1990, ninety six per cent of pregnancies among graduates of the Women's Centre, which operates a programme for adolescent mothers, were accidental.[39] This is partly due to ignorance about the human body and contraceptives but additionally, Chevannes refers to the 'unsystematic nature of the transmission of [sexual] knowledge,'[40] which means that adolescents learn more about sex from unreliable informal sources such as their peers and the media than they do from their parents or teachers at school. Also, there is a general disdain attached with the use of contraceptive methods particularly by men.

As Cameron and Ricketts mentioned however, not every adolescent pregnancy is accidental and, 'in some communities it would be almost unusual for a girl of sixteen or seventeen years not to have a child.'[41] There are those who have argued that in the absence of clearly established rites of passage, sexual activity and childbearing have become, for some, symbols of transition into adulthood.[42] This pattern of casual

---

[36] H. McKenzie, quoted by E. Leo-Rhynie, in *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), p. 31.
[37] B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), p. 10.
[38] S. Cameron and H. Ricketts, *Changing the Future for Jamaica's Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1999), p. 24.
[39] B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), p.16.
[40] Ibid., p. 7.
[41] S. Cameron and H. Ricketts, *Changing the Future for Jamaica's Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1999), p. 25.
[42] Chevannes, *What We Sow and What We Reap* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1999), p. 38.

adolescent mating has implications for family life because of the contribution it makes to the number of pregnancies in Jamaica.

Sexual attitudes in general also have a bearing on union formation. The common occurrence of simultaneous sexual unions or multiple relationships is one indication of this. Whereas in Western culture a monogamous relationship is still held as the norm, in the Caribbean 'the cultural assumption is that monogamic fidelity is impossible.'[43] The result is that multiple partnerships, each involving some level of commitment and sexual relations, are quite common. This is particularly true among men, but it is commonly accepted and practiced by women also.[44] Alternatively, sometimes women find themselves in a series of childbearing relationships. Though some women do this out of choice, many find themselves in dependent relationships because of their reliance on men for both material and emotional support. Adolescent mothers, who feel forced to discontinue their education after their first pregnancy, are most vulnerable to this type of dependency.

Sexual relations with different partners, whether simultaneously or serially, have implications for the range of family forms that may develop when children are involved. Together, sexual relations and union types determine the multiple forms that families take.

---

[43] R.T. Smith quoted by B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), p. 5.

[44] Chambers and Chevannes, referred to by B. Chevannes, "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review," *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), p. 27.

UNION TYPES AND HOUSEHOLD CLASSIFICATIONS

Afro-Caribbean family life is often described in terms of the union types and household classifications. Different kinds of mostly non-legal unions are characteristic features of the Jamaican family life patterns. There are three primary types of unions identified throughout the literature: visiting unions, common-law unions (also known as co-residential or cohabiting unions) and legal marriage.

Visiting unions are relationships that are publicly acknowledged but not legally or religiously recognised. Partners do not share residence but may share a sexual relationship. In a co-residential or common-law union, partners live together in the same household. Like the visiting union, it is publicly acknowledged and involves sexual intimacy but has no legal or religious sanction. In either case, the relationship can be dissolved by mutual consent or by the decision of one of the parties and there is very little social pressure to preserve the union. Legal marriage is a legal covenant usually solemnised with a religious ceremony. It is considered a permanent commitment in a shared household and can only be dissolved by legal means.

Family researchers have brought attention to the fact that union types generally tend to follow a serial order. Chevannes, for example, observes that, 'people, at very early ages, mate first extra-residentially, then they cohabit consensually, and in later life go on to legalize their unions through marriage.'[45] As Jamaican women and men increase in age, there is a change in which union type is more prevalent. Among younger women and men (nineteen to twenty-five years), visiting union is by far the most common type. Between ages twenty-five to thirty-four for women (up to forty-five for men), that changes to common-law unions. In the older age groups, it is legal marriage unions that top the list.[46] Visiting unions are therefore seen as representing the formal beginning of the mating cycle and legal marriage its culmination.

The common occurrence of so called 'casual unions' which are sexual alliances with very little emotional commitment has led some researchers to argue for its consideration as the first stage of the mating cycle. The tenuous nature of these

---

[45] B. Chevannes, "Stresses and Strains: Situational Analysis of the Caribbean Family," (Unpublished Paper for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 1994), p. 7.
[46] Ibid.

relationships raises questions for this consideration. However, they cannot be totally overlooked as a factor in family formation since children often result from them.

This progression in union status which points to a gradual increase in union stability has however been challenged. Firstly, on the ground that the age correlation which is used does not give due consideration to what occurs in individual relationships. When individual cases are considered, even if a person did go on to legal marriage, it might not necessarily be with the partner with whom they shared a visiting or common-law relationship.

Secondly, the progression theory has been challenged on the basis of movement between different types of 'non-legal' unions. LeFranc, for example, has demonstrated an 'apparent dominance of and/or movement between "non-legal" unions... less than ¼ of all relationships involved progress into marriage… It is likely that very few of all relationships actually get to the "terminal third stage" of marriage.'[47] Indeed, there is a disproportionate amount of non-marriage unions that exist among the lower socio-economic classes. Approximately seventy per cent of Jamaicans live in common-law or visiting unions.[48] This has led some to suggest that non-legal unions and common-law unions in particular functionally represent marriage for most working class Jamaicans. This disproportion may very well indicate, if not a rejection, at least some ambivalence about legal marriage but equally it could signify that there might be a change of union status in any direction and not necessarily in a progression towards more stable types culminating in legal marriage.

Thirdly, the progression theory has been challenged on the basis of the questionable stability of common-law unions. As some like Hartley contend, 'a variety of evidence indicates that consensual unions, in which a man and a woman live together, with their children, are rarely stable, long-lasting or legalized later in life.'[49]

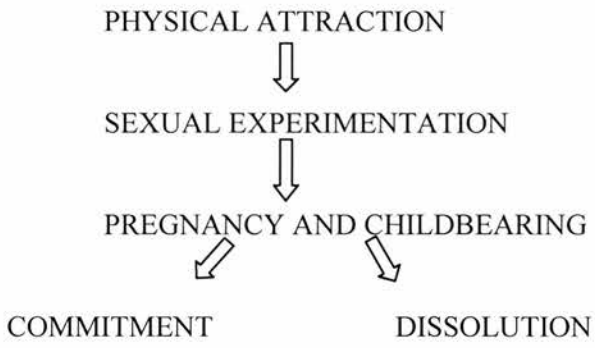
---

[47] E. LeFranc, et al., "The Meaning of Sexual Partnerships: Re-examining the Jamaican Family System," *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* (Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1994), p. 25.

[48] E. Leo-Rhynie, *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), p. 8.

[49] S. Hartley, "Illegitimacy in Jamaica," in *Bastardy and Its Comparative History*, Laslett, P.; Oosterveen, K.; Smith, R.Eds. (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1980), p. 379.

A fourth basis for the challenge has to do with the factors that influence the choice for one form over another. The birth of a child is one such factor. As an inner-city pastor, it was my observation that relationships often follow the following schema:



Childbirth therefore seemed to be a pivotal stage and often led to a deeper commitment and a more stable relationship. It was not uncommon however, for the relationship to break down because of the anticipated demands and responsibilities associated with child-rearing, often with the father choosing to opt out. The progression therefore is not always toward more stable unions.

What is also evident is that a number of factors make visiting unions a preferred option among inner-city Jamaicans. There are apparent advantages to both women and men. Fear of losing independence and fear of spousal violence, which intensify in co-residential relationships are typical examples of what women often cite as the reasons for their preference for visiting unions. For men, the visiting union facilitates involvement in multiple relations. Moreover, it provides one way of coping with the common gap between expectations of the male/father as financial provider and the reality of limited financial resources in a harsh economic environment. It also has the advantage of allowing them to avoid paternity or to abdicate paternal responsibilities if they so desire.

In addition to the external socio-economic realities, there are internal psycho-cultural factors that make long-term commitment difficult for men. These factors can often make union stability very uncertain. As a result, most inner-city Jamaicans pass through a number of unions in their lifetime, with the longest ones lasting on an average of three to four years. The majority of visiting unions in particular, 'are short-

lived affairs lasting no more than a year or two.'[50] Legal marriage therefore becomes a low priority option. Later in the study, the attitudes to legal marriage will be more thoroughly discussed, but for now it is sufficient to note that among inner-city Afro-Caribbean people, legal marriage is often associated with the achievement of status requiring some amount of economic stability. It is therefore usually reserved for later life.

In the final analysis, it is the variety of union types, the prevalence of non-legal unions and the relative instability of unions generally which give rise to an array of family forms. This variety is most clearly seen in typologies used to classify family by households.

Earliest attempts at classification of Afro-Caribbean families centred on the household, and reflected the assumption that a household contained a family. This approach however is not without its drawbacks for there is the tendency to overlook the fact that any full description of family in Jamaica must take into consideration inter-household ties which result from visiting unions. As Christine Barrow observes:

> *Several writers appeared to recognise the importance of extra-residential kinship ties especially those linking to the fathers and conjugal partners, but seemed unable to incorporate these into their typologies and theoretical paradigms.*[51]

In recognition of this reality, one researcher has referred to what she calls a 'non-localised' family which describes the situation in 'which family ties continue to function although the family members do not live under the same roof.'[52] Strictly speaking, individuals belong both to a family and a household and the two may or may not be the same. Despite this anomaly, household classification still offers a useful way of considering the variety and complexity of family forms found in the

---

[50] H. Rubenstein, "Conjugal Behaviour and Parental Role Flexibility in an Afro-Caribbean Village," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17, 4 (1980), pp. 330-337.
[51] C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 60.
[52] N. Solein, quoted by Barrow in *Family in the Caribbean,* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 62.

Caribbean. Details of different classification schemes will not be discussed here but some general observations about them will be made.[53]

Firstly, the classifications reflect the central role of the mother or grandmother figure and the frequent absence of a father figure. This is seen in terms such as 'maternal' and 'grandmother' families, which Henriques used.

Secondly, they reflect considerable flexibility and variety based on such factors as:

- The nature of the union between a couple (legal or common-law).
- Whether there are others living in the household such as an uncle or a friend.
- Whether the children in the household belong to both parents or to one from a previous relationship, or were being cared for on behalf of some other relative or a friend.

Thirdly, household classifications also reflect the prevalence of extended and blended families. The picture that emerges is of endless permutations and combinations of family forms making exhaustive classification almost impossible.

PATTERNS IN GENDER ROLES

Gender roles in Afro-Caribbean families, like other cultures, have often been seen as segregated with a clear demarcation between the expectations of the father/male partner and those of the mother/female. More particularly, there is a tendency to see the role of the male as being outside the household or domestic domain and the female's role as primarily centred within the household. The central or focal role and authority of mothers and grandmothers have been consistently observed throughout the history of Caribbean family studies. It is this feature of Caribbean family life that is referred to as matrifocality.

---

[53] For more on household classification of Afro-Caribbean families see T. Simey, referred to by Barrow in *Family in the Caribbean*, (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 56;
F. Henriques, *Family and Colour in Jamaica* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), pp. 115-117 and E. Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me* (Second Edition), (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies 1999), p. 12.

Barrow identifies two main criteria defining matrifocality.[54] The first relates to the mother's central place in relationships in the family, particularly mother-child relationships. The other has to do with the mother's authority and dominance within the family, which is in contrast to the strong patriarchal paradigm that exists in the wider society. A distinction must also be made between matrifocality and female headship. The latter refers to the designation to the female as household head based on factors such as power in decision-making, ownership or control of residence, level of income contribution and male absence. In most cases of co-residency, a male is considered to be the head of the household. In Jamaica, he is frequently absent and women therefore head many households. Matrifocality exists outside of female headship even where a male is present because in most situations it is the mother who provides the stable figure or focal point around which the family revolves. The result very often is strong mother-child bonding, sometimes at the exclusion of the father. It is the mother who is expected to provide nurture and emotional support and is the main agent of family socialization. Management of the domestic affairs within the house is also seen as part of the mother's role even when women work outside the home.

Father, by comparison, is expected primarily to provide financially. Discipline and guidance particularly to sons are also seen as part of the father's role. There is however, a growing level of overlap in the respective gender roles in the family today, for example, some fathers are participating in more of the nurturing aspects of childcare. Research on fathering trends suggests that 'a large majority of the samples claim to play with their children and counsel them every day. Between forty and fifty per cent stay with them daily; slightly less help them with homework, and approximately one-third tidy them.'[55] Some fathers express a desire to fulfil their expected role as providers though many do not. High unemployment and low wages, among other factors, often make it difficult for them to live up to that expectation. What is more, non-residency and having to share limited resources between different households that may have resulted from multiple relations can restrict their provider potential as well as limit their contact with some of their children. According to a situational analysis of women and children in 1995:

---

[54] C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 73.
[55] B. Chevannes, "Stresses and Strains: Situational Analysis of the Caribbean Family," (Unpublished Paper for ECLAC, 1994), p. 15.

> *While the majority of children in Jamaica know both of their natural parents, and identify with both of them, they are not likely to live under the same roof with both. In general, about a third of all children under the age of sixteen years live with both natural parents, while two-fifths live with the natural mother only and a fifth live separately from both of their natural parents, growing mainly with other relatives. A small proportion (five per cent), live under the same roof with their natural father only.*[56]

It is this combination of weak economic potential, sharing of resources between different households and non-residency that often render the father marginal in his function and effectiveness. These factors also contribute to mothers being saddled with the brunt of the responsibility for the care of their children. In 1993, 'over 45.4 per cent of Jamaican households were headed by women.' [57] For the most part, female household heads are poor, under-educated and in the worst paid, lowest-status jobs. This is not without far reaching effects on the well-being of many inner-city families; not least because of the impact this can have on the process of parenting.

---

[56] Planning Institute of Jamaica, Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Jamaica (Kingston Jamaica, UNICEF, 1995), p. 163.

[57] Ibid., p. 87.

PARENTING PRACTICES

Socialisation, parent-child communication and punishment are basic aspects of parenting. The ways these are carried out constitute some descriptive features that characterise patterns of family in Jamaica's inner cities.

Socialisation, as in most other societies, takes place along fairly distinct gender lines. Children are socialised to see certain domestic roles such as cooking, washing and nursing babies as female responsibilities. Conversely, roles outside the domestic sphere are seen as those of the males. Additionally, girls are subjected to tighter controls and supervision whereas boys are freer to socialise with friends outside the home for longer periods. 'As a socialising site, the street or the road or the village square is a male domain, in contrast to the yard, (home) [my addition] which is a female domain.'[58] Perhaps because of this, the girls develop more life skills in self-management that may predispose them to greater success at school. This is arguably a contributing factor in the educational trends that show females outperforming males in most subject areas particularly in post primary education.

Another significant aspect of socialisation is the limited participation of fathers. The effect of father absence on personality development is a much-debated issue. What is less debatable, is that many children in Jamaica do not have the active involvement of their biological father in the process of their socialisation with varying consequences depending on the gender of the child, the nature of whatever limited relationship they may have with the father and possibilities for substitute male figures or other compensatory factors in their household.

Parenting in Jamaica's inner cities can also be described by the patterns of parent-child communication. There is generally speaking a verbal communication gap that exists between parents and their children. Communication is too often inadequate and as family studies indicate, 'there is little real informational and elaborated code of communication in the family setting. Children learn a lot in the family but more by indirect rather than by direct methods and the sharing of confidences and the

---

[58] Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Situational Analysis of Women and Children in Jamaica* (Kingston Jamaica, UNICEF, 1995), p. 29.

rationalities for doing one thing or another.'[59] In addition, the nature of the communication is often lacking in affirmative content. University of the West Indies social scientists, Wilma Bailey and others, have observed that there is a 'large volume of disciplinary communication about negative possible selves and dire consequences.'[60]

This raises the matter of practices of punishment for it is not uncommon for the warnings of 'dire consequences' to be related to punishment. Physical punishment is commonly used as a form of discipline. Although both parents and children consider it a natural means of punishment, it is not uncommon for it to become excessive. As Bailey mentions:

> *It is clear that lower class families in the Caribbean have been largely unaffected by the democratic and permissive ideals that have informed attitudes to child care in developing countries in the post-war years. Cultural attitudes have created a climate that is conducive to physical abuse of children. It is not by chance that the more extreme manifestations of child abuse are to be found in poor families where single mothers try to cope with the economic and social problems associated with raising a large family ...*[61]

These parenting practices are not without their consequences on the psychosocial development of children. Whereas they may contribute to the mental toughness and tenacity for which Caribbean people are known, they may also sow seeds for low self-esteem, gender conflict and anti-social behaviour.

---

[59] W. Bailey, et al., *Family and the Quality of Gender Relations in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Mona, ISER, 1998), p. 50.
[60] W. Bailey, et al., "Parenting and Socialisation in Caribbean Family Systems," *Caribbean Dialogue* (Cave Hill, Barbados) 4, 1 (1998), p. 23.
[61] W. Bailey, et al., *Family and the Quality of Gender Relations in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Mona, ISER, 1998), p. 48.

SUMMARY OF THE JAMAICAN FAMILY LIFE PATTERNS

This section has sought to outline the features that have come to characterise Jamaican inner-city families. The sexual attitudes and practices that influence the family forms present throughout the Caribbean have been described. In addition, the significant variations of family forms reflected in the classification of union types and household structure have been discussed. Finally, common gender roles and parenting practices that characterise Afro-Caribbean family life have been considered. As part of the background to this exploration of family pastoral care, it will also be important to represent from prior research some of the factors that have contributed to these patterns.

FACTORS SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY PATTERNS

One question that has received considerable attention from researchers on Caribbean family patterns has been, what are the factors that have shaped the development of the family forms, which are evident in the Caribbean today? As some scholars have highlighted much of the patterns of family life have persisted since the time of slavery. Family patterns in slave society characterised by irregular mating, various union types (legal marriage being in the minority), a central role of mothers and the marginal role of fathers persist today. Most significant of these was the dominance of non-marital unions, which as Barbadian pastoral counsellor, Neilson Waithe notes, persisted even when marriage became legal for slaves in the 1840s.

> *....when the churches - more especially the nonconformists groups such as the Methodists, Moravians and Baptists, who had significantly influenced the slaves - thought that this pattern would give way to legal marriages, they found to their bewilderment that it continued.*[62]

The approach to be taken here therefore is to examine the factors under two broad headings. Firstly, factors influencing origins of family patterns and secondly, factors influencing their continuance. The difficulty of reconstructing the past and the absence of appropriate records of the slaves' experiences mean that some amount of speculation is unavoidable but relevant historical and sociological research provide a guide for the discussion.

FACTORS OF ORIGIN

Some of the earliest researchers into Caribbean family life patterns were concerned with explaining their origins. Two basic schools of thought have emerged concerning the origins of Black families in North America and the Caribbean. One approach, posited by scholars such as Franklin Frazier, emphasised the disruptive effects of the institution of slavery on the development of family forms. Alternatively, some felt that it was the retention of African customs that accounted for the family patterns. Herskovits, one of the main exponents of this view, suggested that many of the

---

[62]N. Waithe, *Caribbean Sexuality* (Bethlehem PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1993), p. 24.

patterns observed, constituted 'retentions and subsequent reinterpretations of African custom.'[63]

In keeping with the disruptive theory, sociologist Orlando Patterson notes that:

> *Slavery in Jamaica led to the breakdown of all forms of social sanctions relating to sexual behaviour and with this, to the disintegration of the institution of marriage, both in its African and European forms.*[64]

For the most part, many of the conditions of slavery hindered the consistent formation of family among the slaves. The control of the planters was one such condition. For example, because the power of the white slave masters was almost absolute, slaves and their offspring belonged to the slave masters, to do with them as they pleased. Separation of slave families was frequent and could be done without a second thought. This, along with the effective control over slave children, could at times have disenfranchised the slave parents of their parental authority particularly that of the father. Although stable co-residential unions were established between slaves on many estates for much of the period of slavery these were not always encouraged by the planters. These forces could have contributed to the matrifocality and the marginal paternal involvement that are still manifested these days.

Other disruptive conditions, which could have militated against consistent family formation, were the sexual practices of the slaves. Promiscuous sexual activity was sufficiently widespread for the whites to consider this to be characteristic of the mating practices of the slaves. Whereas the very structured system of polygynous unions and family formation had its roots in parts of West Africa, it is not clear whether promiscuity was an aberration of this, or an imitation of the behaviour of white planters. Whatever the case, promiscuous sexual activity would have laid the foundations for the tendencies towards multiple relationships, and the disconnection of fathering roles from husband roles, which are evident today.

---

[63]C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 5.
[64]O. Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery*, (London, Macgibbon and Kee 1967), p. 159.

Sexual abuse and exploitation of female slaves by the planters also took place although the frequency of these incidences is disputed. Where slaves gave birth to children as a result of sexual encounters with the whites, there was the likelihood of the mother being the sole parent to provide care for that child thus increasing the more matrifocal family form. Concurrently, stronger male slaves were sometimes treated as little more than studs for impregnating female slaves to increase the slave stock. By so doing, genital and social fathering functions were detached from each other. It is little wonder then, that over many generations of slavery, sexual relations could become disconnected from social fathering responsibilities in the ways that are observed nowadays.

One of the less considered factors influencing the development of family patterns among Afro-Caribbean people has been the influence of the colonial culture. On the one hand, the planter class sexually exploited the slaves and modelled a lifestyle of promiscuity. On the other hand, they would have also modelled the forms of union formation built around monogamous Christian marriage often initiated by an elaborate wedding. Moreover, in colonial society the culture of the slaves was seen as inferior and that of the planter class as superior. The culture of the planter class therefore became something to aspire to and marriage became associated with status and means, which often were not achieved. The slave was locked between two cultures, that of the colonial powers which many saw as an imposition but which represented power and status, and the cultures of the various parts of Africa from which they came, which were part of them but associated with inferiority and low status. The slaves' norms of union and family formation were disrupted and the norms of the colonisers were seen as the superior option.

The vestiges of colonial influences are probably a part of the explanation why middle and upper class families have come to be modelled more closely off the colonial paradigm, and why marriage and an elaborate wedding continue to be seen as the ideal by even the poorest but who feel they have not attained the requisite conditions for a legal marriage without certain status symbols. Other union types and family forms have therefore become the accepted alternative. Conversely, it may also explain why some in Afro-Caribbean society desire to throw off the former oppressor's cultural trappings (such as legal marriage). In some Rastafarian

communities, for example, non-legal unions are seen as part of the resistance to the cultural domination by whites.[65]

In contrast to the disruptive theories others point to factors suggesting retentions of African custom. Herskovits in particular argued that African retentions did not always manifest itself in overt ways but functioned beneath the surface as internal attitudes and values. These it was felt contributed to the culture 'in terms of reinterpretations of African customs' rather than as 'full-blown retentions of African ways of life.'[66] What is more, some retentionists argued that the disruptive theory tended to see family forms of the slaves as poor imitations of Europeans and severed their connections with their African past. For Herskovits, 'A people without a past are a people who lack an anchor in the present.'[67]

Many of the customs of marriage, family formation and rites of passage were greatly affected by the experiences of forced migration and oppression. Yet traces of 'Africanism' survived in the collective unconsciousness of the slaves.[68] Children resulting from sexual relations between the slaves would need some setting in which they could be nurtured and housed. The customs of the slaves would have been a framework for some semblance of family formation. In this regard, matrifocal customs observed in slave society and which mirrored similar practices in parts of West Africa could represent retentions that served as ways of preserving family life in spite of the inconsistencies of mating relationships and union formation.[69] However, as Barrow has noted, matrifocality has been 'variously attributed to the African heritage, the slave system, poverty, community organisation and contemporary socio-economic circumstances...'[70] A direct correspondence to African custom is therefore problematic. Moreover, given the variety of cultural forms present in West Africa,

---

[65] Rastafarianism emerged in Jamaica as a socio-religious movement in the 1930s. Some expressed their separation from the rest of society by setting up small communities. In these settlements, by lifestyle and religious practices, they propagated a Pan-Africanism and rejection of Euro-centric cultural norms such as legal marriage.

[66] M. and F. Herskovits *Trinidad Village*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.

[67] M. Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past,* Boston, Beacon Press (1958), pp. 185-186.

[68] J. D. Roberts *Black Theology Today: Liberation and Contextualization.* Toronto Studies in Theology, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, (1983), p.84.

[69] Massiah observes for example that the centrality of the mother's role 'was firmly entrenched in the kin systems of West African tribes transported to the New World.' See J. Messiah 'Women who Head Households' in *Women and the Family*, (Cave Hill, Barbados ISER, Women in the Caribbean Project, Vol. 2, 1982), p. 62.

[70] C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 22.

from which the slaves mainly came, it is difficult to make generalisations about family trends. In spite of these discrepancies however the central role of mothers within many family structures across West Africa and the possibility that these tendencies could be retained as internal attitudes and values do give some credence to the possibility that matrifocal patterns seen in the Caribbean could be partly attributable to African heritage.

It is evident however that neither the disruptive effects of slavery nor the retention of African cultural practices, in whatever form, were the only factors influencing family life. Living arrangement of the slaves was another factor with a bearing on family formation. What scholars like Higman and Craton have established is that living arrangements of the slaves on some plantations during the later years of slavery reflected family groupings and that these family groupings were the norm in slavery society.[71] As Barrow notes moreover, the work of these demographic historians points to the existence of various family forms with stable conjugal unions and nuclear family households being the most common among the slaves.[72] Three-generation families were also quite common as were multiple household units that consisted of clusters of maternal kin giving rise to the extended family networks which have continued to be a feature of Caribbean family life.

Changes in the imperial policy were another factor that affected family formation. For example, the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the policy of amelioration announced in the British Parliament in 1823 brought conditions more favourable to family formation. These included legislation 'prohibiting family separation, especially between mothers and children,' incentives on some estates for families having more children, active encouragement for union formation of co-residential nuclear families.[73]

Alongside these policy changes, the action of Christian missionaries fostered family formation. These missionaries promoted Christian marriage as a necessary part of conversion to Christianity. Even though slaves could not be legally married, some

---

[71] B. Higman, "Household Structure and Fertility on Jamaican Slave Plantations: A Nineteenth Century Example", *Population Studies 27, 3* (1993), pp. 527-550 and M. Craton, "Changing Patterns of Slave Families in the British West Indies," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History X, 1* (1979), pp. 1-35.
[72] C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 241.
[73] C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), p. 252.

churches accepted co-residential conjugal unions, which were a well-established part of slave society. Many of the slaves who eventually married had previously lived together for some time in stable unions. It was these stable unions formed on their own initiative, rather than the introduction of legal marriage, which were the greater factor in shaping family forms of slaves and ex-slaves. Such unions were recognised by the slave community and reflected in the records of household groupings.

A number of demographic factors about slavery society may also have influenced family patterns in mainly negative ways. Imbalances in sex ratio and age distribution are typical examples. For the most part, there was a preponderance of males which would have affected mating patterns and union formation. 'In situations where slaves could not pair off one-to-one, promiscuity and conjugal abnormality were assumed to be inevitable and, conversely, in situations were sex ratios were balanced, nuclear families could and did develop.'[74] Additionally, early and frequent deaths, low fertility levels and high rates of infant mortality influenced family stability as well.

The essential question therefore seems to be, what was the state of family life during the period of slavery and what factors influenced mating patterns, union formation, fertility, child-rearing practices and residency of kinship groups? The historical research over the last twenty years, which has uncovered evidence of the presence of family forms during slavery, to some extent challenges the chaotic picture painted by disruptionist scholars such as Patterson. According to Higman, for example, 'the stresses placed on the African family life systems of the slaves were obvious.... Yet in spite of these stresses, there is evidence of strong bonds of kinship and a sense of family among the slaves.'[75]

In light of what has been discussed here, merely taking either of the two dominant positions to explain the origin of Caribbean family forms does not take sufficient cognisance of the complex process by which a variety of possibly conflicting factors that existed during slavery impacted on family patterns. What is more, various forces had different levels of ascendancy at different periods. The early periods of slavery for example, would naturally have been a major period of dislocation and factors

---

[74] Ibid., p. 258.
[75] B. Higman, "Household Structure and Fertility on Jamaican Slave Plantations: A Nineteenth Century Example," *Population Studies* 27, 3 (1973), pp. 527-550.

acting against consistent family formation would have been most prominent. On the other hand, the period just after amelioration but before emancipation with the attempts to increase fertility and general well-being of the slaves was a period during which forces more amicable to family development may have come to the fore. What might be a more helpful approach therefore is a hybrid of these various factors that admits the difficulties of retracing historical connections, avoids over-exaggerating the forces of disruption and affirms resilience under extremely difficult conditions.

What has emerged therefore is that various forces during slavery discouraged the consistent formation of families. Yet there was sufficient space given in which the slaves did establish meaningful family relations. These were to survive against the odds and ultimately gave rise to the features of family life that existed at the time of emancipation. These features have continued for almost 170 years since emancipation. Some of the factors that have influenced their continuance will now be looked at.

FACTORS INFLUENCING CONTINUANCE

The factors to be discussed here are by no means exhaustive but are sufficient to provide a reasonable explanation for how the basic family patterns, which evolved out of the combination of forces that came together during the period of slavery, have persisted. These factors include economics, migration, changing social values, religious values and changes in gender dynamics.

Unstable economic conditions since emancipation have been a persistent feature of Caribbean life. Some have seen the family forms that have developed in Jamaica as adaptations to the prolonged economic underdevelopment found in the Caribbean.

> *The flexible extra-residential patterns of non-legal unions and child-shifting constitute appropriate adaptive mechanisms in response to economic conditions. They were no longer seen as a problem, but as a cultural solution to a problem, the problem being the adverse and unstable conditions of poverty and marginalisation within which people live.*[76]

---

[76] Ibid., p. 80.

An example of this is the preference of many women for visiting relationships, in order to maintain access to financial support from kinship networks. Indeed, the persistence of extended family networks has often been seen as a way of surviving some of the possible ill-effects of economic hardship and father absence. This is particularly important considering there is no welfare support in Jamaica, which many women facing similar challenges in more developed countries might be entitled to.

Similarly, the persistent economic instability has helped to marginalize the father from the family. There seems to be a perpetual gap between the perceived role of a male as provider and what he is able to deliver from modest wages or no wage at all. Preference for the less stable non-residential unions by males therefore may also be motivated by economic considerations. Over time, it is possible that the persistent inability to live up to the expectation to be financial provider has created an attitude of withdrawal on the part of many Caribbean men and a reinforcement of the central role of mothers.

Another issue, related to economics, is migration – both internal migration to centres where work was available but more significantly overseas migration. These various waves of migration have influenced gender ratios, familial stability in general and union stability in particular, resulting in a favouring of non-legal unions, the creation of more households headed by women, greater matrifocality, and marginal paternal involvement. In more recent times, with the increase in migration of both women and men, there has been a growth in the number of sibling households headed by older teenage siblings without adult presence or supervision. Though these are rare they have attracted national attention.[77]

Economics and migration have therefore played their part in influencing the preservation of family patterns in Jamaica that existed at emancipation. Nevertheless, the fact that legal marriage and nuclear family forms are present among those living in lower socio-economic communities on the one hand, while on the other hand, non-marriage unions and non-nuclear families exist among the middle and upper classes suggest that economic factors are not the only ones affecting family patterns.

---

[77] See for example, E. Leo-Rhynie, *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), pp. 25-26.

Changing social values have also had an influence on family forms. These changes are reflected in the increased range of union status classifications used in family research and the national census data collection as well as in legislation to support the elimination of bastardy.[78] This stems from an increasing tolerance and acknowledgement of visiting and common-law unions as well as children born outside of marriage. Although legal marriage continues to be seen as the ideal by some, and at least as an ultimate union status by most, there is a cultural adaptation to alternatives that have been reinforced over time. Each generation, since slavery, has seen or experienced increasingly more non-married family forms and therefore has been socialised into seeing these as normal and acceptable.

The media, particularly the exposure to North American television and local popular music, has influenced social values in more recent time. Studies have indicated the erosion of traditional values caused by American television in various countries.[79] The liberal portrayals in the media of sexuality, glamorisation of relational conflicts and the preoccupation with pursuit of material interest all have a bearing on family life. The influence of popular culture is an area of intense debate in the Caribbean which cannot be reproduced here. While the effects of things like popular music on cultural values are debateable, they reflect a range of attitudes to male-female relationships in general and sexual relations in particular.[80]

Religious values have been a consistent determining factor for union formation and stability since slavery. In lower socio-economic settings where families based on non-legal unions are the norm, it is religious values very often that have influenced others in the same setting to choose family forms based on legal marriage. Studies among women have demonstrated that religious values are an important factor in both desire for marriage and choice of a partner.[81]

---

[78] Since 1975 a number of Caribbean territories have adopted legal reforms to extend rights of inheritance to children born outside of a legal marriage. See C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996).

[79] H. Dunn, (Ed.) *Globalization, Communication and Caribbean Identity* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995), p. 58.

[80] Carolyn Cooper explores some of the attitudes underlying Jamaica's popular Dancehall music genre in *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture* (London, Macmillan Caribbean, 1993).

[81] Study by Roberts and Sinclair (1978) and quoted in O. Senior, *Working Miracles: Women's Lives in the English Speaking Caribbean* (Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991), pp. 87-88.

The changing landscape of gender relationships is a more contemporary factor influencing the patterns of family inherited from slavery. On the one hand, there has been an increased marginalization of men and boys and on the other, the progressive advancement of women and girls. The marginalization of males is understood in two main ways.

In one way, the males are marginalized in that the roles they are expected to play as provider locate them in the workplace, on the margins of the family and outside the domestic domain. In another way, marginalization refers to the process by which institutional or other forces dis-empower the males and render them unable to properly fulfil their role. It is this latter sense that is most relevant for our discussion at the moment.[82] Harsh economic realities, underemployment, low levels of literacy and employable skills caused by anomalies in the education system and family socialization have effectively reinforced the debilitating effects of slavery on men such as their detachment from social fathering roles. Jamaican psychiatrist, Dr Anthony Allen feels slavery has affected the identity of Caribbean males as fathers. He postulates that this crisis of identity manifests itself in the dichotomy between the expressed desire for stable relationships and to be responsible fathers on the one hand, and the contradictory behaviour on the other. Allen presents a stark picture when he says:

> *Given the questionable status of marriage, as well as the poor role models set by the elite during slavery, traditional cognitions and skills regarding the husband and father role were lost and not replaced by suitable models. This provided for 200 years of role castration.*[83]

One result is a lowering of expectation for paternal presence and participation and an adaptation to family forms that are less dependent on a father. Referring to Jack Alexander's 1977 analysis of male marginality, Barrow notes that:

---

[82] Errol Miller explores male marginalization as a global phenomenon but with particular reference to the Caribbean. See E. Miller, *Men at Risk* (Kingston: Jamaica, Jamaica Publishing House, 1991).
[83] T. Allen, "Treating West Indians" *Clinical Guidelines in Cross-Cultural Mental Health* (New York: John Wiley and Son 1988), p. 312.

> *...Lower-class male marginality may have preoccupied Caribbean researchers, but it is not a major concern to people they have studied. Middle-class Jamaicans, however are very concerned about male marginality. The reason has to do with how essential the husband/father is to the family...In contrast, among the lower class he is not indispensable to the family and the group is not threatened if he is not around.*[84]

While males have become marginalized, Jamaica, like much of the Caribbean, has also seen considerable advancement of females. In addition to better performances in education, women are taking advantage of increased employment opportunities. 'The changes in occupational structure and rise in service-oriented industries have provided increased opportunity for women to become economically independent...'[85] The combined effect of disempowerment of males and advancement of women contributes to the challenges to gender harmony and union stability.

---

[84] Alexander (1977) referred to in *Family in the Caribbean* by C. Barrow (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers), p. 174.

[85] W. Bailey, et al., *Family and the Quality of Gender Relations in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Mona, ISER, 1998), p. 21.

SUMMARY OF FACTORS SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY FORMS

Jamaican family life patterns have emerged out of a dynamic interplay of ethno-historical, economical, cultural, religious and psychosocial factors. The period of slavery brought together conditions, which though generally hostile to consistent family formation, provided a context in which the African slaves were able to make adaptations to their family customs suitable to the situation. Out of this slavery period have come family patterns that have persisted throughout the Caribbean since emancipation. These have been preserved by various factors. While acknowledging the way in which many of the features of family life have remained the same since emancipation, this must never be taken to suggest that there have been no changes or that these are impossible. In this regard, contemporary trends towards greater participation of fathers in child nurture, in response to the increase participation of women in the workforce could be significant signs of change on the horizon.

Some more worrying trends however have been the increasing number of sibling households in which responsibility for the running of the home is that of the older sibling while the parents are in absentia usually due to overseas migration to find work. Also domestic and community conflicts have undermined trust between neighbours and this has adversely affected the practices of community parenting. In addition, with the increasing employment opportunities for women, fewer grandmothers in urban communities - the mainstay of the extended family networks - are available to provide family support.

When family researchers assess Caribbean inner-city family patterns there are two broad perspectives that seem to be reflected. One perspective, as some have suggested, is that the patterns of family are adaptations to a social and economic environment that have not always been 'family friendly.' Also, union patterns have allowed for greater independence and freedom for partners. Moreover, in spite of the difficulties, families have continued to fulfil their role in the socialisation and formation of persons. The fact that out of Jamaica's inner cities have come outstanding national and international leaders, professionals, artists and sportswomen and men are indicative of this.

The other perspective is that there are aspects of inner-city family life that are considered to undermine well-being. Low self-esteem seen in emotionally challenged school-age children, increases in the levels of domestic violence, increased pressures on single mothers, worsening marginalisation of our males, and deviant behaviour suggest that all might not be well. As Chevannes suggests:

> *In a situation where one person out of a population is a deviant, we would focus an explanation of his deviance on the formation of his personality. But in a situation where an entire section of a population is deviant, our focus inevitably must be directed to processes that shape the foundations of behaviour.*[86]

Chevannes discusses different sources of socialisation some of which are in conflict with the socialisation carried out by families. Yet families remain one of the main institutions of socialisation. Moreover, increasingly pastors and church communities have to address themselves to the support needs of single parents, couples in conflict, teenage mothers, under-supervised children and youths as well as the growing number of under-skilled, unemployed males in inner-city communities.

As will be argued in the next section, attention should be given to theological praxis that is responsive to the needs of Afro-Caribbean families in inner-city communities as a development of a wider Caribbean theological project. That is the goal to which this study is committed. But what is Caribbean theology and how does this study fit into that wider project? It is these questions that will guide the discussion in the next section.

---

[86] B. Chevannes, *What We Sow and What We Reap* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1999), p. 23.

SECTION 1.4 'EMANCIPATION STILL COMING'

Kortright Davis, in his book, *Emancipation still Comin*, from which this section takes its title, posits the view that the project of emancipation in the Caribbean is not complete. In his book, he develops the idea that 'the major force which Caribbean people have to call their own, religion must become the primary instrument for their active engagement in the reconstruction and historical emancipation of their society.'[87] Caribbean theology is an emerging area of scholarship on the theological landscape which takes this view as its focal point. Over the last three decades, Caribbean theologians have sought to define it as a distinct area among the family of liberation theologies. In this section, some of the roots of this theological project will be identified and some of its features and areas of emphasis will be described. Most importantly however, the importance of a family theology as an area of development for this theological enterprise will be proposed. It is important, at the outset, to examine briefly how Christianity came to the Caribbean.

CHRISTIANITY MEETS THE CARIBBEAN

The term 'Missionary Christianity' is used to refer to the attitude, approach and assumptions of the churches of the European colonial powers as they transported Christianity to the colonies. In this form of 'evangelisation,' Christianity was imposed upon the peoples of the colonies without regard for their free will or indigenous religious beliefs and practices. It was an integral part of European expansionism that was epitomised in what Caribbean theologian, William Watty refers to as 'the audacious unilateral act of renaming a territory which had already been named by its native inhabitants.'[88] Indeed, the European's right to dominance was taken for granted as a God-given 'mission to rule and guide the world as he sees fit.'[89] As Watty argues, this approach to evangelisation was a departure not only from the precedent set in the christianisation of Europe but also from how the gospel was spread by the early Church.

---

[87] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 2.
[88] W. Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981), p. 12.
[89] Ibid., p. 18.

> *It is very illuminating to observe...how, in their zeal for the conversion of indigenous people to the Christian faith and in the strategies of proselytization which they chose to adopt, the European missionaries completely overlooked their own precedents, forgot how the gospel reach out beyond Palestinian Judaism and forgot how Europe itself became christianised in the first place. Throughout the history of Christianity until then, evangelisation and accommodation went hand in hand.*[90]

Four features of this Missionary Christianity are worth noting. Firstly, like any other religion, it was transported in the culture of its bearers. Western culture and Christianity were enmeshed in such a way as to render the two indistinguishable. The imposition of Christianity therefore also meant the imposition of European culture.

Secondly, this process of cultural imposition assumed a superiority of Western culture and ethnicity. Caribbean theologian, Lewin Williams in his book, *Caribbean Theology* observes that:

> *When the gospel came to the Caribbean it arrived not merely clothed in European culture but the European culture was consciously promoted as superior to all cultures.*[91]

Non-European races and cultural expressions were devalued as pagan or heathen. This was to be an attitude that persisted even after emancipation. Williams makes reference to reports by a Scottish missionary in 1840 of his evangelistic efforts in the Caribbean in which he speaks of being 'amidst a wild waste of heathenism.'[92] This attitude of superiority was also reflected in the tendency for churches in the colonies to seek or be required to seek clergy from the 'mother church' as recent as the early twentieth century.

---

[90] Ibid., p.19.
[91] L. Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, Research in Religion and Family: Black Perspectives, Erskine, N (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), p. 22.
[92] Ibid.

Thirdly, Missionary Christianity for the most part sided with the planter classes and complied with the colonial machinery in its expansionist ambitions, economic exploitation and the brutal system of slavery. The Church seemed preoccupied with the pacification of the slaves and was apparently unconcerned with issues of justice. There was in all of this, an obvious contradiction between the preaching and teaching of a loving God on the one hand, and the experience of oppression at the hands of this God on the other. As such, the missionary church abdicated its prophetic responsibility. Williams speaks to this abdication when he says:

> *It is therefore the Caribbean charge that the missionary church compromised its prophetic position from the very inception of the European expansion into the New World, through the long colonial period endured and even into the neo-colonial period.*[93]

It must be said however that the Church was to eventually play a significant role in the struggle for emancipation. In addition, education before and after emancipation and resettlement of the ex-slaves were significant aspects of the Church's mission in the Caribbean during that period. The Free Village Movement referred to earlier illustrates the point. (See p. 5).

Fourthly, Missionary Christianity was considered to be Eurocentric in its theological construction and methodology. As such, it bore close connections with Western philosophy and assumed a theological objectivity and universality that was not sufficiently attuned to contextual nuances. What is more, its theology with its dichotomy between spirit and body was more concerned with spiritual freedom than with social and political freedom, with inner needs of the soul than with physical needs, with individual salvation than with community and social liberation, with hope in the life after death than with correcting the injustices and deprivations in this life.[94]

The interconnection between European colonialism and Missionary Christianity has meant that the experiences of the Church in the Caribbean, in many ways, mirrored the legacy of colonialism on the wider society. The Caribbean Church was cast in the

---

[93] Ibid., p. 14.

[94] I. Hamid, Paper presented at the Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development, Trinidad 1971, *In Search of New Perspectives* (Bridgetown, Barbados: CADEC, 1971).

image of the European Church. Its values and theology, its liturgy, forms of ministry, architecture, vestments and church polity were adopted almost wholesale and are still prevalent in the traditional denominations. Associated with this were a disdain for what was local and indigenous and a disregard for the African retentions in the religious thinking of Afro-Caribbean people. This has had two significant effects.

The first effect is that it progressively rendered much of the Caribbean Church out of touch with the religious 'pulse' of the people. Sociologist, Barry Chevannes points out that Eurocentric churches have failed to tap into the deeply religious tendencies in Afro-Caribbean people because their theological frame of reference is different.[95] For example, although early Methodism and the Moravians emphasised experience and the work of the spirit, European Christianity for the most part see a dichotomy between the spirit and the material worlds and emphasises dogma and a way of relating to God that is cerebral. In contrast, Afro-Caribbean people tend to see greater integration between spirit and matter and emphasise experiencing God and relating through feelings and emotions.

The second effect is that the Caribbean Church, in the absence of an indigenous core, has also shown a tendency to imitation, which today expresses itself most graphically in an uncritical acceptance of various brands of American Christianity. The Pentecostal and Evangelical denominations, which came largely from America, have in some ways struck a cord with Afro-Caribbean spirituality with their emphasis on spiritual experience, supernatural power, feelings and emotions as well as a willingness to experiment with more contemporary worship idioms. This has been one of the factors influencing the rapid growth of the Pentecostal-Evangelical churches and a commensurate decline in some of the traditional denominations.

However, these newer churches have tended to imitate American individualistic leanings, over-emphasising material prosperity without equal concern for issues of social justice. What is equally disconcerting is the uncritical imitation of these American churches by some of the traditional churches in an effort to broaden their appeal.

---

[95] See for example B. Chevannes, "Our Caribbean Reality (2)," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995).

It is this proneness to imitation which, for some Caribbean theologians, creates a vulnerability to what they call 're-colonisation' not only by the conservative brands of theology but even by liberation theologies that are not relevant to the context. [96] The task of grounding Christian theology in the historical, social and cultural context of the Caribbean becomes even more important in light of this. Caribbean theology has emerged for this precise purpose. It is arguable that the effects of Missionary Christianity, among other factors, gave rise to a quest for a Caribbean theology.

MISSIONARY CHRISTIANITY... THE 'WOMB' OF CARIBBEAN THEOLOGY

When Moses, the Hebrew baby found near the bank of the River Nile, was taken by Pharaoh's daughter to live in the Egyptian emperor's palace, who would have guessed that in later years he would be the architect of liberation of the Hebrew people from Egyptian slavery? That is the story of many of the theologies of liberation and Caribbean theology no less. The theological, social or political setting that groomed these theologies has often become the target of their liberation struggle. It is against this background that an argument will be advanced that 'Missionary Christianity' was the 'womb' of Caribbean theology in two senses.

In one sense, it was frustration with it and reflection on its inappropriateness for the Caribbean context that catalysed the consideration of another way of theologising. Watty reflects this frustration when he says:

> *...the under-girding religious and ethical framework that operated in our Caribbean history worked strongly for our underdevelopment...for us to continue to operate under this same religious and ethical framework is to walk in the same paths of underdevelopment.* [97]

The articulation of an indigenous theology therefore emerged as a reaction to the theology of Missionary Christianity.

---

[96] See for example Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981).
[97] Ibid., p. 6.

In another sense, Missionary Christianity gave birth to Caribbean theology in that it was mainly out of traditional denominations with European origins that the pioneers in this enterprise have come. Although being schooled in a Eurocentric theological thinking and method, they were impacted by other factors which contributed to conscious indigenous theological reflection. Five such factors are briefly worth noting.

Firstly, Caribbean theology owes its stirrings to the indigenisation of leadership in the Caribbean Church. This happened progressively as overseas 'sender' churches gradually relinquished control of their offshoots in the Caribbean. In addition, the change over of leadership occurred as more theological training opportunities became available in the region and as local personnel increasingly staffed these theological institutions. Reflecting on the situation that obtained just a few decades ago, the former principal of the United Theological College of the West Indies observes that:

> *As an institution the church was not exempted from the impact of colonization, one manifestation of which was the retention of the leadership of the churches and theological colleges in expatriate hands up to a few decades ago.*[98]

Secondly, the undercurrent of African religious spirituality influenced the articulation of a contextual theology. This African spirituality had survived the period of slavery as an intrinsic part of Afro-Caribbean people as well as in the form of religious sects. These existed alongside the predominant Christian Church but for the most part were rejected as pagan and occultist. Increased interest in these groups stimulated an interest too to understand the African roots of Caribbean spirituality and expose the discontinuities with Eurocentric Christianity.

A third factor was the Pan-African Movement fashioned on the philosophy of Marcus Garvey for the upliftment of the black race and repatriation of the African Diaspora. One overtly religious expression of this was the emergence of the Rastafarian socio-religious movement in Jamaica in the 1930s. Rastafarianism was characterised by its rejection of the Europeanisation of God and a quest for a more Afro-centric divinity.

---

[98] H. Gregory, *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), p. xiv.

Fourthly, there were various socio-political movements in the 1960s, which included the Black Power Movement as well as increased interest in leftist ideologies which was to culminate in a period of socialist experimentation in many parts of the Caribbean during the 1970s. These factors legitimised the struggle against European domination, and the quest for identity and indigenisation, which the Caribbean theological enterprise was to embark upon.

The fifth factor and probably the most significant influence of all was the emergence of other theologies of liberation especially in Latin America and Black Theology in North America. Out of the stirrings in the early 1970s, Caribbean theology is beginning to manifest clear features and a methodology. Though it has many commonalities with other liberation theologies, Caribbean theologians are often at pains to point out that it differs from those because of the particular problematic of the region to which it attempts to speak. Theresa Lowe-Ching in exploring the relationship between Latin American theological methodology and Caribbean theology notes that:

> *Caribbean theologians highlight Colonialization and the consequent dehumanising experience of slavery, particularly among the majority Black population, and its debilitating effects on all facets of Caribbean society as the focal point of Caribbean oppression vis-à-vis the Latin American emphasis on an unjust economic world order and, more recently, on the cultural alienation of the indigenous peoples...For both theologies the underlying concern is for the non-person, created by sinful societal structures, to be accorded the dignity as befits a human person.*[99]

Similarly, Caribbean theology is not preoccupied with the issue of racism in the way that Black theology needs to be. Though there are important lessons to learn from these pioneer projects, for Caribbean theologians, the priorities are different. It might be helpful at this juncture to consider what some of the priorities may be.

---

[99] T. Lowe-Ching, "Latin American Theological Method and its Relevance to Caribbean Theology," *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), p. 25.

PRIORITIES OF A CARIBBEAN THEOLOGY

The essential task of Caribbean theology is to advance the process of emancipation from the oppressive effects of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. It is an oppression that has persisted in spite of the abolition of slavery and political independence because of the deep-rooted nature of these 'debilitating effects.' In this context, notions of salvation, freedom and liberation are most aptly expressed by the motif of emancipation. In response to this, Cuban theologian, Adolfo Ham identifies five key priorities for this venture, namely: decolonisation, identity, integration, development and education.[100] To this, Jamaican theologian, Ashley Smith adds family and gender relationships.[101]

As the Caribbean seeks to interpret the implications of the gospel for Caribbean people, it must grapple with the struggle to decolonise, to throw off the shackles of the past which continues to haunt Caribbean people. Decolonisation '...must be a conversion of the heart, a reorientation of the mind, a re-valuation of values, a destruction of oppressive and alienating structures and a reconstruction of appropriate structures. It is a revolution in social relations.'[102] Most importantly, Caribbean theology must decolonise Missionary Christianity which undermines a contextual understanding of the Christian faith.

Fundamental to Caribbean emancipation also is an affirmation of the cultural identity of Caribbean people. It should be one that fosters a maturity, self-reliance and self-confidence born out of a sense of the purpose and destiny of Caribbean people, as a part of God's unfolding narrative. Moreover, it should be lived out in a church that is Caribbean in its theological formulation, worship and pastoral priorities.

Contextual theological engagement must speak to the matter of Caribbean integration. It should address itself to the factors that divide Caribbean people and which diminish their collective voice on the world's political and economic scene. Caribbean

---

[100] A. Ham, "Caribbean Theology: The Challenge of the Twenty-First Century," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 1-6.
[101] A. Smith, "In Response to Adolfo Ham (2)" Ibid.
[102] W. Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981), p. 16.

theology must be truly ecumenical as it models to the region the integration paradigm that God calls Caribbean people to offer to the world.

Development is another priority of Caribbean emancipation and in turn of Caribbean theology. Helene Castele has described development as:

> *The process by which powerless people everywhere are freed from all kinds of dependency - social, cultural, economic - so that they can create a personal sense of history for themselves and thereby express their full potential as human beings.*[103]

However, the stages of development and the particular priorities for development are contextual. It is the context that determines the state from which development is proceeding, as well as the direction in which it is desirable to proceed. Development specialist, Ron Ayres cautions against a blanket approach to the challenge of development in Third World countries, which does not take into consideration contextual particularities.

> *There may be common international roots to third world problems (colonialism) but it is important to differentiate between the contemporary obstacles facing Africa, Asia and Latin America, which require different national strategies for development.*[104]

This consciousness is particularly threatened by globalisation and its tendency to generalise and gloss over regional or national peculiarities. True development that advances Caribbean emancipation must give consideration to the various historical, sociological and cultural factors that define the context. In the Caribbean the need to strike a balance between regional integration and respect for national peculiarities mirrors the balance that is necessary on a global scale.

---

[103] H. Castele, Ed., *World Development, An Introductory Reader* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1971), p. xv.
[104] R. Ayres, Ed., *Development Studies: An Introduction through Selected Readings*, (Greenwich University Press, 1995), p. x.

Education and family life are also integral to holistic development and ultimate emancipation of the region's citizens. This is so since there is the need for a process of socialisation that empowers women and men to achieve their potential. Reflection on the praxis of churches in relation to education and family life, which are the primary sources of socialisation, must therefore form an important part of the Caribbean theological project. One of the key elements of any look at the family is the matter of gender relationships. The partnership between women and men, which has suffered greatly from the region's historical realities, should also be forged in the wider society.

These then are the priorities of a Caribbean theology. As this theological project is undertaken however, it must recognise the indispensable human need for God's inner healing, reconciliation and liberation and that this is not achieved simply by praxis for socio-political liberation.[105] As such, it is the conviction that the gospel has a unique contribution to make for achieving inner healing, reconciliation and liberation as well as to foster a fuller and lasting emancipation that must drive the search for a contextual theology. For Caribbean theologians this process is well underway.

---

[105] W. Persaud, "Caribbean Response to the Globalisation of Theological Education," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 35-49.

THE NEED FOR CARIBBEAN FAMILY THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

There has been a need, for some time now, for Caribbean theological scholarship to address itself to the realities of the Caribbean family highlighted earlier in this chapter. Pastoral theologian, Vivian Panton in his book, *The Church and Common-law Union*, draws attention to the need for theological reflection on family life in the Caribbean when he states that:

> *While much research has been done from a historical and sociological perspective, very little has been attempted to examine and assess the response of the church to prevailing family patterns.*[106]

This research effort does not pretend to be alone in its concern for family life. Over the last three decades, there have been efforts to do so. Most notable of these was a consultation hosted in 1971 by the Planned Parenthood Programme of Church World Service, which saw as its objectives:

1. *To explore the historic attitude of the churches to the family structure in the Caribbean.*
2. *To study under guidance of a theologian and sociologist the theological and sociological backgrounds of attitudes, and to see how the perspectives of each discipline can provide a more sensitive awareness of the problem affecting families.*
3. *To identify the dilemmas of the churches in their ministry to the families.*
4. *To define, in the context of the Caribbean, the destructive theological imperatives which will address themselves to this situation.*
5. *To provide, through a written report, guidelines for action.*[107]

---

[106] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), p. 1.
[107] L. Haynes Ed., Fambli: Proceedings of Consultation on the Church's Responsibility to the Family in the Caribbean (Church World Service, 1972), p. 1.

The consultation has influenced the Caribbean churches' reflection on the family since then and the report published in 1972, under the title *Fambli*, has been a valuable resource in this regard. However, its impact has been limited by the absence of a theological framework to empower the churches' action.

Another notable contribution was that of Vivian Panton whose book was referred to earlier. For him:

> *If the Church in Jamaica is to be true to its nature and responsibility in effecting its mission, it must take a fresh look at the theology which under-girds its ministry and develop a theology which is consonant with its nature and its mission within the context of the Jamaican culture. Such a theology will inevitably influence the development of new forms of ministry...*[108]

He provides very useful analysis on the Church's response to family patterns from the slavery period to the present, and his discussion of a 'theology of marriage'[109] is an attempt to articulate a theological framework but stops short of providing the more complete family theology that is required. Also he focuses on one aspect of family life, a common-law union, which means there is limited application for the model of care that he proposes.

Also worthy of note is the work of Family Life Ministries, an evangelical para-church organisation, which has, in recent years, sought to provide training and educational resources on family issues as well as counselling services to give much needed support for family concerns. However, once again, they have been unable to develop a contextual family theology.

Additionally, recent work by Neilson Waithe reflects another attempt to grapple with the research on the realities of Caribbean family life in a culturally sensitive way but again fails to provide an agenda for action.

---

[108] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law* Union (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), p. 40.
[109] Ibid., p. 42.

In conducting the fieldwork for this research, there was at least one local church and a number of individual pastoral theologians who were engaged in serious reflection on the issues of family.[110] However, there is a dearth of published material, empirical research or implementation of pastoral models that are addressing the concerns being reflected upon. This thesis will seek to expand on this current scholarship.

[110] See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with B. Taylor, Appendix VIII-A, pp. 403-404.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the context of the Caribbean in which this research project takes place. The tension between chains and freedom that has characterised the history of the region has been represented. This, as discussed, is evident in the social, economical, political and psychological realities of the region and its people. What this thesis will argue is that family life is another stage on which this chain-freedom drama is being played out.

The process of urbanisation and the characteristic features of inner-city communities that have resulted from this process were briefly described. These include the poor living conditions, extended family housing arrangements, high unemployment, crime and violence. This research project must take these features seriously.

Reference was also made to the wealth of social science research to describe the patterns of Afro-Caribbean families, the factors influencing these patterns and the growing pastoral care needs generated by family-related concerns. These pastoral care needs have initiated a desire for further theological reflection, which this study undertakes as part of the wider Caribbean theological project.

In view of this, a backdrop has been provided to the Caribbean theological enterprise and its priorities and foci briefly explored. As part of this, its emancipatory orientation has been highlighted. It is against the background of the socio-historical issues raised in this chapter and the focus of a Caribbean theological methodology that this thesis adopts an emancipatory perspective on the family. This will be developed later in the thesis but such a perspective recognises the unfinished nature of the process of emancipation for Caribbean people and is committed to the role of the family in advancing it. Moreover, the need for greater support from the churches to help maximise the potential of families to be vehicles of emancipation should be considered. In the next chapter, the methodological considerations that underpin this study will be outlined.

CHAPTER 2
MOMENTS IN THEOLOGY: METHODOLOGY FOR A CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study is both a theological and a sociological exploration and in this chapter how it was conducted will be outlined. To do so, there will be the need to discuss the theological methodology employed for this research project as well as the details of the sociological field research undertaken as one component of the process. It will be important, as part of that outline, to identify the study as a work in practical theology, to briefly explore the contemporary developments in this area and their implications for the theological methodology not least of which is how it incorporates social science research.

The chapter will be presented in four sections. The first will be a statement of the problem that gives a background to the subject being explored as well as the hypotheses and questions that guide the research.

The second section will consider the contemporary character of practical theology and its predisposition towards a practical paradigm. Here too, the implications of this paradigm for the theological methodology used for the study will be discussed.

The third section will present an interpretation of the features and stages for doing Caribbean theology which details further the theological framework within which this research project was conducted.

The fourth section will outline the design of the field research undertaken.

SECTION 2.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

A history of slavery and colonialism, with their corollaries of cultural and economic domination, has given rise to various family patterns that are typical throughout the Caribbean region, particularly among the poorer sectors of the Afro-Caribbean population such as those living in the inner cities of Jamaica. These have persisted in the face of continued economic hardship and changing values and social dynamics.

These patterns are characterised by:

1. A variety of mainly non-legal union types and the common occurrence of multiple unions.
2. A high proportion of children born outside of legal marital unions.
3. Variable and flexible household structures including extended family forms and inter-household arrangements.
4. Matrifocality with fathers playing a marginal role and often non-resident.
5. Parenting patterns that place a high value on childbearing but which have a tendency to involve harsh methods of communication and punishment and low levels of affection and affirmation.

The variety of union types, the prevalence of unstable unions, serial unions and multiple, simultaneous relationships give rise to an array of family forms. Although these patterns are part of the cultural fabric of a people, which have facilitated the basic functions of the family, and in many cases have served as adaptations to difficult socio-economic realities, yet there are elements that hinder whole-person well-being and as such necessitate liberation. What is evident moreover, is that family-related concerns generate an increasing number of pastoral care needs and present a growing challenge to the churches' pastoral ministry. In addition, there is growing unease about the decline in social order and the possible links this might have with the quality of family life. In her book, *The Jamaican Family*, Professor of Women and Development Studies, at the University of the West Indies, Dr Elsa Leo-Rhynie makes the observation that:

> *Many Jamaicans protest against the indiscipline in our society, the violence, the lack of moral values, the emergence of a 'me' generation whose members ignore the rights and feelings of others and who have little or no social conscience.*[1]

Whereas Dr Leo-Rhynie expresses the concern that these conditions might have a negative impact on family, others are concerned that these are the results of poor family life. The development and well-being of a community have often been related to the quality of family life of its members. Echoing this sentiment, Senior Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, John Rapley, commenting on what economic historians have said about family and development, suggests 'by and large, they have concluded that stable, strong families are an important prerequisite to economic and social development.'[2] The present quality of family life experienced by many persons living in the inner-city communities in Jamaica could undermine their ability to achieve their full potential materially, socially and spiritually. It may therefore contribute to the retardation of fuller emancipation for a society still in the shadow of its colonial past.

The Church, as part of its ongoing ministry, has always had a vested interest in preserving the integrity of family life. Moreover, there is an additional imperative in view of the increasing needs of families especially in light of the shortage of support agencies. As part of the drive to comply with the requirements of the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Jamaica is a signatory, government departments have been giving more consideration to family support services. However, there is no comprehensive welfare system to address the support needs of inner-city families. Much of the family support work is done by non-government organisations (NGOs) such as the Women's Centre Foundation of Jamaica that is involved in supporting teenage mothers. Also, in recent years, more voluntary agencies that support children and parents have emerged.[3] These agencies however, do not have the network, resources or influence on their own to impact the

---

[1] E. Leo-Rhynie, *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), p. 1.

[2] J. Rapley, "The Family and Development," *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), April 19, 2001.

[3] See information on initiative for better parenting in S. Cameron and H. Ricketts, *Changing the Future for Jamaica's Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1999), pp. 26-27.

quality of family life for whole communities. The network of churches present in most inner-city communities, the resources they can mobilise and the relative goodwill harboured for them by most community residents make the Church one of the few agencies around which a programme of community-wide support and empowerment for the family could be developed. Family life empowerment therefore constitutes an area for greater mission engagement by churches in the Caribbean.

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is based on the hypothesis that effective church-based family ministry within Jamaica's inner cities requires a culture-sensitive or contextual family theology and a relevant model for family ministry. This stems from the presupposition that the Church is guided by an implicit or explicit theological framework and model of ministry, and that ministry must be grounded in the realities of the context in order to be effective. A contextual theology provides a basis for how the Christian faith understands and responds to family issues in Jamaica.

A further hypothesis is that family ministry by churches in the Caribbean today is ineffective and that this may be hindered by one or more of the following:

1. A perception of family that is distant from and not sufficiently sensitive to the cultural reality and perceptions of people living in Jamaica's inner cities.
2. The differences in background, outlook and experiences that might exist between members of inner-city churches and inner-city residents.
3. Poor church-community relations or
4. An inadequate model of family ministry in inner-city communities.

This thesis is an attempt to explore these hypotheses. The primary question this study sought to address was: **How can churches effectively respond to the needs and concerns facing families in Jamaica's inner cities today**? Its aims, in keeping with the hypotheses above, were to develop a contextual family theology as well as to propose an appropriate model for inner-city family ministry with particular reference to the Jamaican context.

The study was exploratory in nature and involved analysis of perspectives about families in a targeted inner-city community. This analysis, it was felt, would offer insights into the dynamics affecting families in most inner-city communities and provide a basis for developing a ministry approach that might be applicable to such communities. Given the similarities of family experiences across the Caribbean, it was felt that such a study might also have regional relevance. This exploration was guided by the following subsidiary considerations and research questions.

TABLE 1 RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS*

Considerations	Questions
It was important for the study to establish what were the participants' perspectives and experiences of family. It was necessary to find out what participants felt were the patterns of family most prevalent in the target community, what were the perceived needs and concerns which affected the families there and how churches were responding to these needs. It was important too to explore church-community relations reflected in the way the community perceived the church. From this, some ideas of the potential for cooperation between churches and community for any church-based, community-wide family life initiative could also be ascertained. The perception of participants about the churches' performance in its responses to families was taken as an indicator of the Church's effectiveness. In order to explore how family backgrounds, experiences and perspectives might be a factor influencing family ministry, it was important to compare responses of residents with those of church members.	1. What are the experiences of family life for participants? 2. What are the patterns of family in the target community? 3. How do residents and members of churches in the community perceive these? 4. What are the perceived needs and concerns facing families in the target community and in what priority order are these seen? 5. How is the Church and its response to families perceived by residents in the community? 6. How do the perceptions of residents (about family and family concerns) compare with those of members belonging to churches in the community?

Information about the policies and programmes of how the churches related to family as well as church life in general were considered to be reflective of their current response to families in the target community and therefore an indication of their model of ministry. This was also seen as an indicator of the Church's effectiveness.	7. What do the activities, policies, teachings or other aspects of church life suggest about their underlying attitudes to family, and about their pastoral model for response to the perceived family needs and concerns? What do they suggest about the Church's effectiveness in addressing family issues?
In order to identify how churches could be more effective in its family ministry, the study needed to hear specific ideas and suggestions about the kind of responses to families that participants perceived were necessary and what, if any, were the possible hindrances to churches addressing these.	8. What are the components of an effective model of church-based family ministry for Jamaica's inner cities today?
The aim of the study to develop a contextual family theology and pastoral model meant that it was important to hear from participants what they considered to be God's outlook on families as indicators of elements of a family theology. How this compared with the churches' outlook was also considered important.	9. What are the elements of a culture-sensitive family theology and how does the current family theology of churches in the target community compare with these?

*For questions 1-6 there is no attempt to make a one-to-one correspondence between considerations in the left column and the opposite question. The considerations taken together give rise to these questions.

This study reflects a practically oriented method of theology that has come to characterise the field of practical theology, which over the last few decades has undergone various changes in its scope, character and influence. In the next section, the emerging field of practical theology will be looked at. A process of change that currently characterises this field, some of its features and their implications for the theological methodology of this study will be discussed.

SECTION 2.2 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

STAGES OF THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION AND THE PROBLEM OF DISUNITY

In this section, the aim is to highlight some of the themes that influence the presuppositions about theology adopted in this study. As part of this, the development of theology as a discipline and the disunity between theology and practice that has accompanied much of this development will be examined. This will be done with reference to a schema of the genre of theology proposed by Edward Farley.[4] It presents a helpful overview of the stages of evolution of theology as well as a background to the current discourse on practical theology, which is attempting to address this disunity in the wider theological debate.

It will be necessary also to discuss some of the sources contributing to the current development of practical theology as well as some of the features of a practical paradigm of theology that is emerging from this development. For each feature described, how this informs the theological methodology under-girding this research will be indicated.

Farley posited the view that the genre of theology revealed an essential ambiguity in the use of the term 'theology.' For him, there were four distinct meanings or genres of theology that he, in turn, associated with different stages of its evolution. First of all, there was theology as the knowledge of God, which was based on an understanding that theology was synonymous with an awareness of God cultivated through the practice of prayer, study, worship and discipleship. Farley saw this usage as having currency from the time of the New Testament Church until the Middle Ages. 'In this era, theology involved personal and existential inquiry into the mysteries of divine revelation, undertaken for the sake of helping the Christian

---

[4] E. Farley, "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm," in Browning, D. (Ed.) *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 21-41.

community live toward truth'[5]. Farley referred to this as 'habitus', which connoted the idea of theology as a way of life.

The second genre, theology science, came to the fore in the second through the fourth century as part of the Church's response to the problem of heresy, which was prevalent during that period. In this genre, 'theology is an *episteme*, a *scientia*, an act or cognitive disposition in which the self-disclosing God is grasped as disclosed.'[6] Moreover, theology became the framework within which all Western knowledge was understood and provided the impetus for the establishment of universities during the medieval period. With either of these genre, theology was understood as a unified whole without division into theoretical and practical aspects.

This changed however with a third genre that emerged over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period witnessing the rise and gradual secularisation of schools in Christendom and later universities throughout Europe. In this frame of understanding, theology came to mean a discipline of inquiry and study. This in turn gave way to an understanding of theology as 'a cluster of relatively independent studies.'[7] Theology science gave way to theology sciences. Theology was here seen as a 'faculty' with distinct sub-divisions such as Old and New Testament, dogmatics, and church history. Practical theology within Protestant circles became understood as that branch of theology that was concerned with the practice of the clergy. With increasing specialization there was less integration between different branches of theology and a gap between the sphere of academic theology and the life and ministries of the churches.

The fourth genre, Farley saw as systematic or dogmatic theology associated with a more modern usage of theology and referred to an understanding of theology as a single sub-discipline that was separated from the existential-personal dimension akin to theology habitus. 'Academic systematic theology has, on the whole, become

---

[5] J. Fowler, "The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology," (Conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995), p. 2.

[6] E. Farley, "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm" in Browning, D. (Ed.) *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World,,* (San Francisco, Harper and Row 1983), p. 22.

[7] Ibid., p. 24.

increasingly remote from the practices of Christian faith in the churches and in our societies.'[8]

Farley lamented what he saw as the progressive narrowing of the understanding of theology and the concomitant loss of the earlier genres especially theology habitus. More importantly, he bemoaned the disunity between the different sub-branches of theology and, by extension, the dichotomy between theology and practice. What Farley pointed to moreover is a period in the evolution of theology that served to accentuate this dichotomy.

A central figure in this period of theological evolution was the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher who was often considered as one of the founders of practical theology. In seeking to respond to the challenges to theological education occasioned by the Enlightenment, he proposed a formulation that saw the task of theology, like those of law and medicine, as essentially practical. Theology was seen as a tree whose roots were a fundamental theology that included subjects like history and philosophy of religion. The trunk of the tree, its source of strength, included the systematic study of the tradition in the Bible, history and doctrine. Schleiermacher considered practical theology as the fruit-bearing crown of the tree. It was the 'crowning discipline organizing the other theological specialities toward the end of formulating the specific rules and procedures governing clerical practice in the church.'[9] As such, it included homiletics (preaching), liturgics (worship), catechetics (education), poimenics (pastoral care), and diakonics (management and public service).[10]

Farley has aptly described the end result of such a formulation as the 'clericalization of theology' by which theology generally and practical theology more so became

---

[8] J. Fowler, "The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology," (Conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995), p. 3.

[9] D. Browning, (Ed.) *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World,,* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1983), p. 4.

[10] P. Ballard and J. Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 59.

limited to the sole purpose of preparing clergy for the ministry.[11] What is more, Schleiermacher's proposal helped to create a notion of practical theology as applied theology or the practical application of the 'theoretical' aspects of theology. Put another way, it created a distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' theology, which served to accentuate the dichotomy between theology and practice. It was this kind of formulation some feel which ultimately led to the tendency of practical theology to become a skill-training appendage to theological education and why its 'status within an academic environment became questionable.'[12]

However, over the last three or four decades, this area of theology has undergone what some have described as a 'rebirth'[13] which is reflecting a reversal of this trend. For a better understanding of this development, some of the sources contributing to the rebirth will be considered.

SOURCES IN THE REBIRTH OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Two distinct paradigms of theology coexist side by side today. On the one hand, there is the paradigm of theology as a set of sub-disciplines of which practical theology is one. Conversely, there is the paradigm that sees theology as essentially practical and the various sub-disciplines of theology as interrelated to serve this practical end.[14] For many years, the former paradigm, emanating mainly from Western theological circles, was the dominant one. Practical theology, from this perspective, was seen as the 'finishing school' of theological education, concerned with equipping theological students for the practical aspects of the task of ministry such as preaching and pastoral care.

---

[11] E. Farley, "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm" in Browning, D. (Ed.) *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World,* (San Francisco, Harper and Row 1983), p. 26.

[12] A. Campbell, "Is Practical Theology Possible? " *Scottish Journal of Theology* (Edinburgh, Scotland) 25 (1972), p. 219.

[13] D. Browning, "Towards a Fundamental and Strategic Practical Theology" in F. Schweitzer, J., Van der Ven, *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 54.

[14] Browning and Tracy are representatives of this school. See for example D. Browning, *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World,,* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

This rebirth has involved, among other things, a re-examination of the nature of theology as a whole and the place of practical theology within it. Some are coming to consider practical theology as Lyall states:

> *...as that branch of theology which is concerned to explore the relationship between, on the one hand, Scripture and the tradition of the Church and, on the other hand, the whole range of Christian praxis in the world.*[15]

Furthermore, it has fostered the development of socio-theological aspects of theology (such as political theology) as well as challenged the traditional methodologies for theological reflection. In general, the debates leading to this rebirth have come to see theology as having a more practical orientation.

How has this rebirth come about and what have been some of the contributing factors? One contributing influence has been the debates about theological education in Europe and North America, which, although they continue today, were at its height during the 1960s to the 1980s. These were stimulated by attempts to address concerns about the apparent failure of theological education to equip more of the clergy to make appropriate theological interventions into the existential concerns of contemporary society. Farley's contribution referred to above, came in the context of these debates and reflected a desire to make theological education more relevant to the practice of ministry. Farley's concern was for a more unified understanding of theology and one that saw it as the prerogative of the whole Church in its ministry to society and not just the purview of the clergy and their professional training. The debates about the nature of theological education, however, have not been the only source of influence for this rebirth of practical theology.

The Dutch theologian, Gerben Heitink, argued that another factor leading to this new paradigm of practical theology, particularly in Europe, was the social changes in the middle of the twentieth century, which saw the demise of authoritarian culture and the traditional sources of authority such as the church.[16] Practical theology, 'as a

---

[15] D. Lyall, *Integrity of Pastoral Care*, New Library of Pastoral Care (London: SPCK, 2001), p. 24.
[16] G. Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans 1999), pp. 2-5.

theory of action,' was seen as part of the theology's response to a crisis of relevance. This crisis was intensified by a growth in the social sciences and their related professions, and therapeutic approaches particularly in the area of psychology and psychotherapy. It seemed inevitable that these changes in the social culture would foster interaction between the disciplines of the social sciences and those of theology. This interaction has been a significant source of influence on the rebirth of practical theology.

The new paradigm in practical theology has also been attributed to the rediscovery of practical philosophies that emphasise an essentially practical nature of human reasoning. In the words of one of the practical philosophy's foremost exponents, 'application is neither a subsequent nor a merely occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but co-determines it as a whole from the beginning.'[17] As Fowler pointed out the same figures that impacted philosophical social scientists have also influenced theologians.[18] For Browning these sources of influence include:

> *The tradition of practical wisdom (phronesis)*[19] *or practical reason associated with Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Hume, Kant, the American pragmatists William James and John Dewey, and the neopragmatists Richard Rorty and Richard Bernstein. These include also the hermeneutic theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas, the communitarianism of Alasdair MacIntyre, and many others.*[20]

This new fascination with practical philosophies (which Browning points out has impacted theologians of varying specialities and is not limited to just those who teach practical courses) has been centred on the notion that understanding is essentially concerned from start to finish with application rather than with developing universal

---

[17] H. Gadamer, quoted in D. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 39.

[18] J. Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences," Chap. in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 297.

[19] D. Tracy defines phronesis as prudent understanding of variable situations with a view as to what is to be done. In D. Tracy, "The Foundations of Practical Theology," Chap. in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 73.

[20] D. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 2.

theory.[21] Finding answers to the question, 'what should we do?' is considered the ultimate goal of understanding rather than answering the question 'what is this?' Also, the process of seeking understanding is seen not as an abstract theoretical endeavour but as a dialogue that engages the concrete situation. Action therefore is seen not merely as the application of a universal theory but the end result of a process of dialogue.

Practical theologians are careful to point out however that this practice-centred approach to understanding theology is not at all new. Forrester, for example, notes that:

> *Practical theology as a distinct theological discipline is comparatively young but the idea that theology as such is a practical science has been there from the beginnings of Christian theological reflections.*[22]

Yet another contributing factor to the rebirth of practical theology has been the rise of contextual theologies.[23] These theological approaches are illustrated by various theologies of liberation including those originating in Latin America. Such approaches to theology have emphasised praxis or faith-based action as the starting point and goal of theology. Traditionally, Western theology has been seen as the articulation of a universal core of revelation based on an interpretation of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Practical theology was seen as the application of this core of understanding. Contextual theologians have questioned the objective claims of traditional Western theology as well as the theory-application formulation of the traditional approach, and have sought to highlight the essentially contextual nature of theological reflection. In keeping with this Kortright Davis notes:

---

[21] D. Browning, *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 3.

[22] D. Forrester, "Can Theology be Practical?", in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 16.

[23] See for example P. Ballard in P. Ballard, and J. Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 4.

> *Western theologians are attempting to educate themselves about the new theological surges emanating from the Third World. They have finally realized that there is no universal theology; that theological norms arise out of the context in which one is called to live out one's faith; that theology is therefore not culture free; and that the foundations on which theological structures are built are actually not transferable from one context to another. Thus although the Gospel remains the same from place to place, the means by which that Gospel is understood and articulated will differ considerably through circumstances no less valid and no less authentic.*[24]

It is within this school of contextual theology that the theological methodology for this study may be located.

The debates in the area of practical theology have fostered a rethinking (for some, a restoration) of the structure and character of theology. Some of the features of this emerging practical paradigm of theology and how they inform this study's theological methodology will now be described.

FEATURES OF THE EMERGING PRACTICAL PARADIGM OF THEOLOGY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

As Ballard has suggested we might be better served by living with the tension between the two paradigms of theology, highlighted earlier in this section, rather than rushing to an either/or position.[25] While acknowledging the value of that insight, the leaning of this study is towards the practical paradigm and for that reason, the description offered here presupposes a practical orientation of the whole theological enterprise. The presupposition of this research project is that theology is ultimately about making the appropriate response to one's understanding of God and God's will in one's existential reality. For it is one's actions that are the ultimate measure of one's understanding.

---

[24] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 70.

[25] P. Ballard, and J. Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996).

The writer of Matthew's gospel records a parable which Jesus told about two sons who were both asked by their father to do some work for him on his farm.[26] One said he would not go but did, while the other agreed to go but did not. Jesus commended the son who did the work and used the parable to demonstrate to the Pharisees why prostitutes and other 'undesirables' who, on the surface, did not seem fit for God's Kingdom, were in fact acting more in keeping with the Kingdom mandate than the Pharisees were. It is their action that was the ultimate sign of the Kingdom. Right understanding and giving assent to that understanding are good, but right action is better. What is more, without an action dimension, theology runs the risk of being little more that intellectual gymnastics.

Whether the response is personal or corporate, ecclesiastical or political, prophetic or pastoral, theology is seeking to set forth an answer to the question, 'what would God have me/us to do?' But more than that, it is seeking to fulfil, in a given time and context, the ethical demand of God's revelation for that time and place.

Six features of this practically oriented perspective on theology arising out of the current debates about practical theology are of significance to the theological methodology being adopted for this study. As each of these is described below, how the study process is informed by it will be indicated.

THEOLOGY IS PRAXIS-CENTRED

Theology within a practical paradigm becomes more praxis-centred. This has implication for the process of theologising. Theology becomes not just a process of reflection but one can more correctly speak of 'doing theology' because theology is ultimately expressed in praxis or faith-based action. This notion of 'doing theology' was made popular by the Latin American liberation theologians. In an article in which Roberto Oliveros traces the historical roots of the liberation theology movement, he says, 'to speak of God is to "do theology"'.[27] English clergyman, Laurie Green makes a helpful distinction between theological reflection and doing theology. The latter he sees as 'the overall enterprise, which results when all the

---

[26] Matthew 21: 28-32.

[27] R. Oliveros, "History of the Theology of Liberation," in *Mysterium Liberationis*, Ellacuria, I.; Sobrino, J., Eds. (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1993), p. 6.

disciplines, including theological reflection, work to create a faithful dynamic of action and reflection.'[28]

Also theology that is praxis-centred takes seriously the concrete reality. Some would argue for this as the starting point of theology. In my mind, there are at least two factors that precede the concrete reality. One is the prior existence of God who takes the initiative of self-disclosure. It is this self-disclosure and its implications that the theologian is seeking to interpret or make plain. The other factor that precedes the concrete reality is the prior subjective framework shaped by a person's life story and varying experiences of divine reality. These in turn influence our perception of concrete situations. I prefer to think of concrete realities as ignition switches for the process of theology.

Each time the ignition switch of a car is turned on, the mechanism of the engine is ignited, which powers the vehicle, but that potential was there prior to ignition. In the same way, the experience of concrete situations can ignite a process of revelation that makes plain a reality that is already present. The context provides a screen upon which the ongoing story of God is transmitted and becomes discernible. As such, our experiences of concrete reality are potential ignition switches for the process of knowing God. Each experience in life is a part of that context and therefore a potential source of encounter and disclosure of divine reality. Whether the concrete situation is seen as the initiation or ignition switch of theologising, in the practical paradigm it assumes greater significance.

The methodology of this project takes the Church's praxis in relation to family as its focus and takes the present contextual reality seriously. It is praxis-centred in that it is ignited by an experience of the context and it is ultimately offering insights for appropriate praxis. The concrete reality that ignites this process is grounded in the researcher's experience of parish ministry and high school chaplaincy in an inner-city community but is further stirred by engagement in a case study research of a community in Kingston, Jamaica. Furthermore, it is improved praxis in concrete reality that is the aim of this process.

---

[28] L. Green, *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990), p. 11.

This entire project is an attempt to participate in what Fowler describes as 'a process of intentional practical theological engagement.'[29] That is, 'an intentional process of inquiry and reflection that engages in focused analysis and interpretation of the situation and emergent challenges that call for its attention and address.'[30]

THEOLOGY IS INTRA AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY

Theology that is practically orientated is also characterised by a richer interrelationship between different branches of theology and between theology and other disciplines. From this perspective, practical theology is not just the phase of application of theological theory; it is more than a bridge between theology and practice. Instead, practical theology is:

> *But one of a number of fields in theology, each of which draws on the concerns and resources of the others, but each of which has its own focal concern, and each of which is part of that total theological activity which is there to equip the People of God in the service of the world.*[31]

There is also a multidirectional flow between different aspects of theology rather than the unidirectional flow assumed in Schleiermacher's formulation which was discussed earlier. What this means for the present study is that although it locates itself within the field of practical theology, it makes use of resources of other theological disciplines. It benefits from the resources and insights of traditional theology about family but it will also challenge some of these theological assumptions and propose more contextual alternatives.

One of the areas most enhanced by the practical orientation to theology is its relationship with non-theological disciplines. Other disciplines, particularly the social sciences, have come to be seen as vital allies for both analysis of the human condition as well as tools of ministry. This marriage between theology and other

---

[29] J. Fowler, "The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology," (Conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995), p. 6.
[30] Ibid.
[31] P. Ballard, "Can Theology Be Practical?", Chap. in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), p. 29.

disciplines cuts across the sacred and secular divide, and is based on the assumptions that God's truth or God's meaning is present in the world waiting to be unearthed and that complementary disciplines are able to interrogate concrete situations in ways that theology cannot.

Empirical research, says Johannes Van der Ven, 'provides practical theology with the methods and tools to describe and explain what goes on in the actual lives of actual people.'[32] If practical theology is to address the concerns of the contemporary culture, then it needs the tools of other disciplines to access a fuller understanding of that culture.

As Johannes Van der Ven points out however, empirical research plays a necessary but not sufficient role in the process of theologising. The insights gained from empirical research are only a stage in the process, which should enter into dialogue with more overt theological sources of the faith-community. Fowler warns too of the temptation of a non-critical use of the social sciences in theological inquiry, which he suggests must be kept under 'theological control.'[33] This warning is important in light of the fact that the theological task must acknowledge its allegiance to its norms, values and commitment to discern the 'praxis of God' that might not always coincide with the norms, values and commitment of the social sciences. [34]

Some practical theologians advocate a multidisciplinary approach to theologising with the cooperation of specialists from various disciplines. This approach has tremendous benefits and does justice to the complexity often associated with each discipline that might require specialist participation. However, this is not always practical and was impossible for this project. What is used here is what Van der Ven refers to as an 'intradisciplinary' approach whereby one discipline adopts the methodology of another.[35]

---

[32] J. Van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), p. 20.

[33] J. Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences," Chap. in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 303.

[34] Ibid., p. 303.

[35] J. Van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), p. 2.

Using social scientific research methodology, the researcher undertook sociological analysis for the purpose of theological reflection. The notion of Jesus' presence in the poor, which is so central to the theology of liberation, is an important presupposition adopted here. By the judicious use of social scientific research advocated by a practical paradigm of theology and by actively engaging as the researcher and theologian, one is able to heighten one's empathetic listening to the experiences of the participants being studied as well as one's discernment of God at work in their lives.

THEOLOGY IS INTERPRETIVE

At its heart, theology in a practical paradigm is a hermeneutical activity. This applies not just to the interpretation of the normative sources of the faith but also of the concrete situations, which the theologian is seeking to address. Interpretation of the context, as was suggested, often requires careful analysis using appropriate tools in the social sciences.

In keeping with this feature of theology, this study made use of sociological research that is interpretive in approach. Its primary interest is a description and understanding of the meaning people make of their lives rather than classification or quantification of family phenomena. Social scientist, L. Neuman makes the point that:

> *The interpretive approach is the foundation of social research techniques that are sensitive to context, that use various methods to get inside the ways others see the world, and that are more concerned with achieving an empathetic understanding of feelings and world views than with testing laws of human behaviour.*[36]

Over the years, this perspective on social research has come to be characterised by distinct features, four of which will be briefly noted.

---

[36] L. Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Third Edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), p. 73.

Firstly, the interpretive approach is known by the clear distinction it makes between natural sciences and social sciences. For researchers operating within this paradigm, the main aim of social science is to understand the meaning of social phenomena. 'The basis for explaining social life and social events and for understanding people is not "science" in the positivist sense but common sense, for it contains the meanings people use to make sense of their lives.'[37] It seeks to explore the complexity of the phenomena being studied and offers an 'interpretation' which reflects the perspectives of the people being studied rather than attempting to verify 'laws' that explain the phenomena.

Secondly, the interpretive paradigm is naturalistic, that is, it prefers to study social phenomena in their natural setting.

Thirdly, it challenges the value-neutral understanding of 'objectivity' in social research. It rejects the notion that value neutrality is necessary for social research and affirms that the subjective world is best known through the eyes of the actors. Moreover, it recognises the interaction between researcher and researched as an important dynamic in the process of social investigation. The self-awareness and reflexivity of the researcher are therefore valued rather than a detached, 'objective' posture advocated by other approaches. In addition, the interpretive perspective generally accords greater value for the actors in the context being studied.

Fourthly, the interpretive paradigm is distinct in what it considers to be appropriate data for research. In this regard, it makes greater use of qualitative research data. These have been described as:

> *Any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification...Data might consist of interviews and observations but also might include documents, films or videotapes and even data that have been quantified for other purposes such as census data.*[38]

---

[37] S. Sarantakos, *Social Research* (Australia: Charles Stuart University, 1993), p. 36.

[38] Anselm, Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Second Edition) (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 10-11.

Data collection, in qualitative research methods, tends to gather a large amount of information on one or a few cases. It goes into depth to get more details on the case(s) being examined. Also, it explores aspects of the social world for which it is difficult to develop precise measurements.[39] Qualitative research is mainly descriptive or exploratory and places emphasis on context, setting, and the subject's frame of reference.[40] Moreover, it tends to be open and flexible in its design.

In keeping with this interpretive approach, the case study that constitutes the sociological component of this research project used mainly qualitative data gathering methods. While making reference to available quantitative data that was relevant, its primary data sources were interviews and focus group discussions. The design details of the case study and a rationale for the use of these data collection techniques will be examined in a later section. But it was not just the interpretive nature of a practical paradigm of theology that justified the use of an interpretive approach to this research project. An interpretive approach is preferred also because of the aims of the research project and the nature of the research subject.

The two main aims of the research were to develop a family theology and to propose a model of family ministry. Here, the researcher was seeking to obtain a theological and sociological interpretation of family and attempting to bring the two into dialogue with each other in an effort to determine how the churches should respond given these interpretations. Methods that emphasise measurements, certainty and causality were therefore not appropriate. Instead, qualitative methods that facilitate understanding and interpretation of social phenomena were more suitable.

A look at the nature of the research subject suggested that family patterns have grown out of a mix of historical and contemporary factors that have made them deeply contextual and a very complex subject to explore. A methodology that was sensitive to the context and which allowed the researcher to explore complex issues was therefore a more favourable approach to adopt. What is more, given the limited empirical family research done from a theological perspective, the case study was exploratory. Consequently, a qualitative approach was more suited to this project.

---

[39] L. Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Third Edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), pp. 130-131.

[40] S. Sarantakos, *Social Research* (Australia: Charles Stuart University, 1993), p. 56.

THEOLOGY IS A LIVING PROCESS

Theology seen through the eyes of the practical paradigm is not a fixed body of knowledge.[41] Instead, it is a living process responding to the needs and realities of the context. Theology has always developed as a response to particular situations. For example, it was the response to particular pastoral questions in New Testament times, which constituted the earliest strands of Christian theology. Similarly, it was the responses to the questions stirred by the controversies of the early church that shaped its theology. Over time, some of these theological responses have come to be considered as authoritative beyond the situation for which they were originally intended.

The theologian, in each age and context, must ask if traditional theology is still authoritative for the contemporary situation. It is the questions posed by the context that determine how the understanding of God is worked out in that context. It should not be strange then that some aspects of theology will change from time to time and from one context to another as realities change. This does not mean that God changes or that God is little more than some human construct but rather that the response to our understanding of God will vary from age to age and from place to place. Christian theologians of each age and context must consider what are the questions that cry for answers and seek to faithfully express a relevant response that is consistent with the God of the scriptures. It is in this sense that theology may be considered to be a living process.

In light of this, the theological methodology adopted in this study employed the hermeneutic of suspicion associated with the theology of liberation. As such, it questioned the traditional theological assumptions about family and family ministry born of a church culture steeped in its European and North American origins. Through its analysis of the contemporary patterns and perspectives on family in Jamaica, it sought to discern what the contextual questions were, about the family, for which a current theological response was needed.

---

[41] L. Green, *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990), p. 95.

THEOLOGY IS NOT JUST FOR THE SPECIALIST

A practical paradigm of theology sees it not as the exclusive prerogative of the specialist academic theologian or clergy. For Caribbean theologian, William Watty, scholastic theology involving the isolated study and reflection of a specialist professional theologian is a questionable methodology since it reflects mostly the abstract thoughts of the theologian as they are influenced by his or her cultural experiences and realities. Instead, 'vital communication and intensive participation in the life of people, not scholastic isolation, is the best theological method.'[42] This is not to discredit the value of the academic theologian who engages in deeper research and reflection to facilitate more comprehensive understanding, but to acknowledge that the goal of theology, that of understanding God and how we respond to God, should be the concern of every member of the faith-community and not the exclusive domain of the faith-community's intelligentsia. What is more, meaningful theology takes place not in isolation from the rest of the world but in the midst of it.

This research project was non-specialist in that it interacted with the views and experiences of a range of inner-city community residents as well as members of the Christian community, both clergy and lay. It was also non-specialist in that it operated with the presupposition that in its broadest sense, theology is the prerogative of every believer as an integral part of his or her faith journey. The researcher is therefore not the only source of insight, but learns from others by way of the 'vital communication and intensive participation in the life of people.' The use of focus groups was deliberate as a way of fostering that participation. What is more, the research findings are not considered as a final definitive statement about family and family ministry but as one contribution to the wider debate of churches' family praxis.

The research was also non-specialist in that it went beyond a 'clerical paradigm.' Although this research project may be considered an academic pursuit, it is more than that. It is concerned not just with the work of the ordained clergy but 'with critical theological reflection upon the life of the whole Church and, even more

---

[42] W. Watty, *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981), p. 9.

important, with critical theological reflection upon Christian presence and action in the midst of contemporary society.'[43]

THEOLOGY'S DISCOURSE HAS A BROADER SPHERE

A practice-oriented perspective on theology has implications for the sphere of theology. Theology by this paradigm is not limited to the life of the Christian community or the theological seminary but finds expression in the wider social context. For Catholic theologian, David Tracy, all theology is public discourse and he identifies three distinct spheres to which he sees theological discourse being directed. These are the wider society, the academy and the church.[44] Contemporary theology must seek to build a bridge between these spheres. Whereas I would not go as far as Tracy seems to do in insisting that authentic theological reflection requires public warrant, I accept that theology must engage with the public spheres beyond the Christian community.

It seems to me that whether there is public warrant or not, the theologian operates with the presupposition that God is at work everywhere in the world and wants to say and enact good news, which will foster human flourishing, within the public sphere. God is interested in the issues and situations that concern all of creation and not just the Christian community. Those situations might refer to a region, a country, a group of people or an experience of need and distress. The academic theologian is a part of the Church's attempt to interpret God's good news for those situations and to respond accordingly. Such a mandate must of necessity include discourse within the public domain.

Along these same lines, Alastair Campbell sees practical theology as playing a role of mediation between the life of the Church and life outside the Church.

---

[43] D. Lyall, "Pastoral Action and Theological Reflection," Chap. in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), p. 55.
[44] D. Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981), p. 5.

> *The ordering of fellowship of believers is of concern to the practical theologian, but only as part of the wider question of the place of witnessing, serving and loving community within the whole economy of salvation. A consequence of this is that instead of mission and acts of charity being seen as peripheral to the scope of the discipline, they move to the centre of its concern.*[45]

Similarly, Farley's expression 'ecclesial presence'[46] or Fowler's 'ecclesial praxis'[47] also communicate the notion of the Church's active engagement in the public domain as part of its call to be a healing and transformative presence in the world in partnership with God.

This has implications in turn for this study since the concern is not just with family life within the context of the church community but in the wider society as well. It sought to offer an interpretation of the experiences of family within the Jamaican context and to articulate an appropriate understanding and response by the Church, of God's action with Jamaican families today and, by extension, with families in other parts of the Caribbean.

Moreover, it was concerned with the role of family life in fostering emotional, social and material well-being which went beyond the walls of the churches into the wider public sphere. What is more, it saw the need for interconnectedness with the relevant family-related policies in government and other non-government agencies. It therefore sought to:

---

[45] A. Campbell, "Is Practical Theology Possible?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* (Edinburgh, Scotland) 25 (1972), p. 225.

[46] E. Farley, "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm," Chap. in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 34.

[47] J. Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences," Chap. in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 293.

> *Serve the ecology of institutions, voluntary associations, and instruments of publicity and public influence in and through which Christians can direct the impact of Christian formative and transformative wisdom and power in society and culture.*[48]

For this reason, the field research engaged the insights of professionals outside the church such as sociologists and government policy makers.

In summary then, the contemporary debates in practical theology have fostered an understanding of theology as praxis-centred, having interconnected branches and relating to other disciplines, interpretive, a living process, not just for the specialist and having a broader sphere. These features in turn have influenced how this research was undertaken. Against the background of this overview of the practical paradigm of theology, the next section will outline details of a Caribbean theological methodology.

---

[48] Ibid., p. 293.

SECTION 2.3 A CARIBBEAN THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

In this section, an interpretation of what a Caribbean theological methodology entails will be detailed. As this is done, how it was applied to this research project will be illustrated. Earlier, reference was made to the use of the term 'doing theology' rather than 'theological reflection' as a preferred phrase for the process involved in the pursuit of theological understanding within a practical paradigm. The essential question being answered in this section is, what is involved in doing Caribbean theology and how did that influence this research?

The assumption is made here that much of what has been said about practical theology in the previous section constitute broad areas of similarity between a Caribbean approach to theology and other contemporary approaches. Here an attempt is made to get at the core of the process of theologising. Three of the core features it has in common with other contemporary approaches to 'doing theology' will be examined. Then two additional features (which might not be common with most other approaches) will be discussed, namely its emancipatory orientation and its value for intuition. The latter is not discussed by other Caribbean theologians but like the former, is arguably integral to a Caribbean methodology if it is to be faithful to the context.

Steps in this methodology will be described as phases and moments and how these were applied in this research project will be detailed. The section concludes by looking at some possible limitations for the process.

FEATURES IN COMMON WITH OTHER MODELS

A Caribbean theological approach finds resonance with three core features of other contemporary models. One feature they share is an action-reflection-action dynamic. A second is that they share the concept of correlation and a third is that they share a common respect for the use of scripture. These core features shape the methodological framework of this study and so are worth highlighting.

Various attempts have been made to systematise the process of doing theology.[49] Ballard and Pritchard offer a brief but helpful summary of four models of practical theology, which they call:

1. Applied theology
2. Critical correlation
3. Praxis and
4. Habitus.[50]

To these, could be added models developed by empirical theologians such as Van der Ven, which make extensive use of research methodology of the social sciences.[51] Ballard and Pritchard see these various models being captured in the pastoral cycle made popular by Latin American liberation theologians. This may be considered as consisting of a cycle, or more correctly a spiral, involving the following steps: experience-exploration-reflection-action. (See Diagram 1).

---

[49] See for example J. Van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993); Green in L. Green, *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990); Fowler in J. Fowler, "The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology," (Conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995); Segundo in J. Segundo *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976); Carr in W. Carr, *Handbook of Pastoral Studies* (London: SPCK, 1997) ; Tracy in D. Tracy, "The Foundations of Practical Theology," Chap. in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

[50] P. Ballard, and J. Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996), pp. 57-70.

[51] See for example J. Van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993).

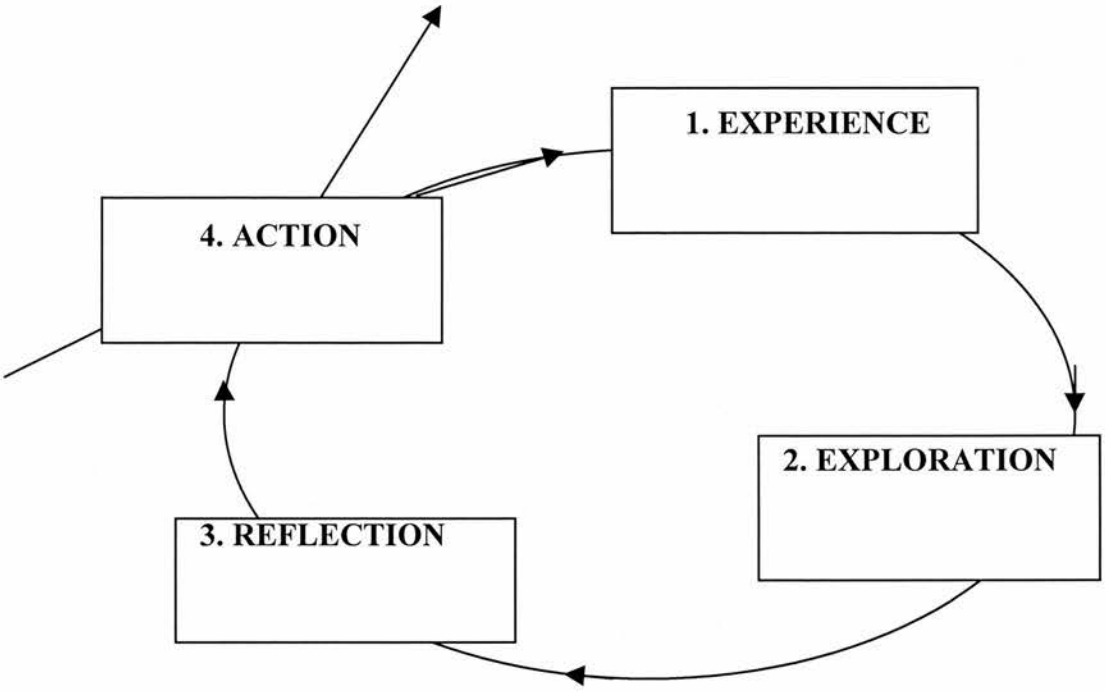


Diagram 1 Pastoral Cycle Model

This may be reduced to action-reflection-action. On the basis of Ballard and Pritchard's analysis therefore, it is possible to consider this dynamic as almost being axiomatic to a contemporary way of doing theology. A Caribbean approach finds resonance with this dynamic.

The process of correlation brings into dialogue the insights from the analysis of concrete reality with those from the normative sources of the Christian faith (tradition, religious experience and scripture). This correlation may be mutually critical in which either source of insight can be challenged and reconstituted in light of the other. Alternatively, correlation might accord greater authority to all or some of the sources of faith. What results in either case is a process that is more inductive than the deductive dogmatic or doctrinal approach of more traditional models of theologising. A Caribbean approach likewise is correlational and inductive, bringing into dialogue the concrete socio-historical realities of Caribbean life with the normative sources of the faith.

Also, for a Caribbean theology like most contemporary approaches, the use of scripture is integral. How scripture is used however might vary from one approach to

another. For Caribbean theological methodology, the Bible is the ultimate authority in the dialogue.[52] This methodology holds the Judeo-Christian scriptures as a primary source of revelation or disclosure of God and God's will. Biblical interpretation however, as Black theologians remind us, is mediated by one's experience.[53] Roberts for example notes that, 'When one rereads the Bible in light of the black religious experience, one is confronted by truths from these sacred texts often missed by the most careful exegetical scholars in the West.'[54] This disclosure moreover is not singular or static but is ongoing in the daily experiences of life. Revelation does not end with the biblical text but one can speak of current revelation. The realities of a particular context constitute a significant source of this revelation.

As the primary source of revelation, the scriptures serve as a plumb line against which current revelation may be authenticated. Current revelation is authentic to the extent that it is similar to, consistent with or a furtherance of scriptural revelation. It is here in the relationship between current and scriptural revelation, as others have suggested, that a creative tension between the inductive and deductive approaches to theology seem important to preserve.[55]

As I have grappled with this process of doing theology, there were other dimensions not present in other models, which could be considered not only as important components but also central to a Caribbean understanding of spirituality and therefore to a contextual way of doing theology. Of particular importance are an emancipatory orientation and the dimension of intuition. The place of these in a Caribbean theological methodology will now be briefly discussed.

---

[52] T. Lowe-Ching, "Method In Caribbean Theology," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), p. 26.

[53] North American Black Theologians have consistently pointed to the central place of the Scriptures in the black experience of the Christian faith. See for example Roberts, *Black Theology in* Dialogue or Cone, *God of the Oppressed.* This has found expression in writings on biblical interpretation from a Black perspective by scholars such as C. H. Felder, T. Hoyt, J. Cone and K. Cannon.

[54] J. D. Roberts, *Black Theology Today: Liberation and Contextualization*, Toronto Studies in Theology (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983), p. 9.

[55] Bernard Reymond has suggested that 'practical theology, is never entirely deductive nor purely inductive.' B. Reymond, Principles and Methods of Practical Theology, Chap. in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), p. 171.

EMANCIPATION AND INTUITION IN CARIBBEAN THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Caribbean theological methodology takes as a distinct hermeneutical base, the motif of emancipation derived from the socio-historical reality of the region and the predominant quest for fuller self-determination. Such a theology therefore advances the quest for fuller emancipation. The entire theological process must therefore be done with reference to this underlying motif. The process of theologising must seek not only to develop a Christian praxis that facilitates emancipation; it must also emancipate the gospel from old and possibly oppressive ways of understanding it.

Another contextual feature to be considered is the dimension of intuition. Although this consideration is not explicitly stated in the writings of other Caribbean theologians, one could argue for its inclusion because it is integral to an understanding of Caribbean spirituality.

Intuition has been defined as 'the ability to understand or know something, without conscious reasoning.'[56] This way of sensing seems to be an integral part of Caribbean epistemological framework. Rural Jamaicans, for example, have a way of expressing their favourable impressions of someone they are meeting for the first time by saying, 'Mi sprit tek har' (my spirit has taken to her). It is a way of expressing a deep knowing about the person that is not based on prior knowledge or overtly rational considerations but more on the basis of 'gut feelings.' This kind of experiential sensing pervades all aspects of Caribbean life including their understanding of spirituality. Chevannes makes the observation that 'African-Caribbean people place a greater emphasis on the experience of God as a normal part of human life than they place on dogma.... The experience of God, they maintain, cannot be limited to the mind but must also move body and spirit.'[57]

While there are some who have argued that intuition is little more than a natural instinct, and others that its importance is too often exaggerated, still others would

---

[56] Reader's Digest *Word Power Dictionary*, (London, Reader's Digest 2001), p. 509.

[57] B. Chevannes, "Our Caribbean Reality (2)," Chap. in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), p. 67.

hold that 'it is by the religious feeling, by an intuition of the heart that we apprehend God.'[58]

Though other models for doing theology make reference to intuition as a part of the process, few make explicit this inclusion or represent it in diagrams or illustrations of their models. One notable exception is Green who speaks of intuition as 'an imaginative leap which sets up an interplay between the explored issue and the Christian faith tradition.'[59] For him, once assessed for its theological soundness, a 'theological intuition' may then give rise to a 'new witness' that can speak afresh to the situation. Intuition is therefore seen as some kind of bridge in the correlation between the insights from the concrete situation and those from the faith tradition.

One could take this a step further to say that intuition can be a channel of spiritual sensing, the spiritual antennae if you will. It is in the arena of the intuition that one can conceive of being influenced by the Holy Spirit. Because of the resonance between intuitive sensing and a Caribbean spirituality, greater value is given to it in this interpretation of a Caribbean theological methodology. As such, it was deliberately integrated into the method used by this study. As the phases and moments of the process are detailed below, how this was done in the research project will be illustrated.

PHASES AND MOMENTS IN THE PROCESS OF 'DOING CARIBBEAN THEOLOGY'

An interpretation of the process of doing Caribbean theology being used in this research project is summarised in Diagram 2. Although a diagram suggests that theologising is a series of distinct stages, it might be helpful instead to think of it as a continuous spiral that corresponds to the action-reflection-action dynamic. For convenience the three main steps will be referred to as phases and the intermediate steps as moments. Each of these in the diagram will be described and how they apply to the present study explained.

---

[58] A view that is condemned as 'derived from absolute subjectivism and relativism – the most fundamental error in philosophy.' For the full text of the discussion see "Intuition" in the Catholic Encyclopaedia http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08082b.htm.

[59] L. Green, *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990), p. 93.

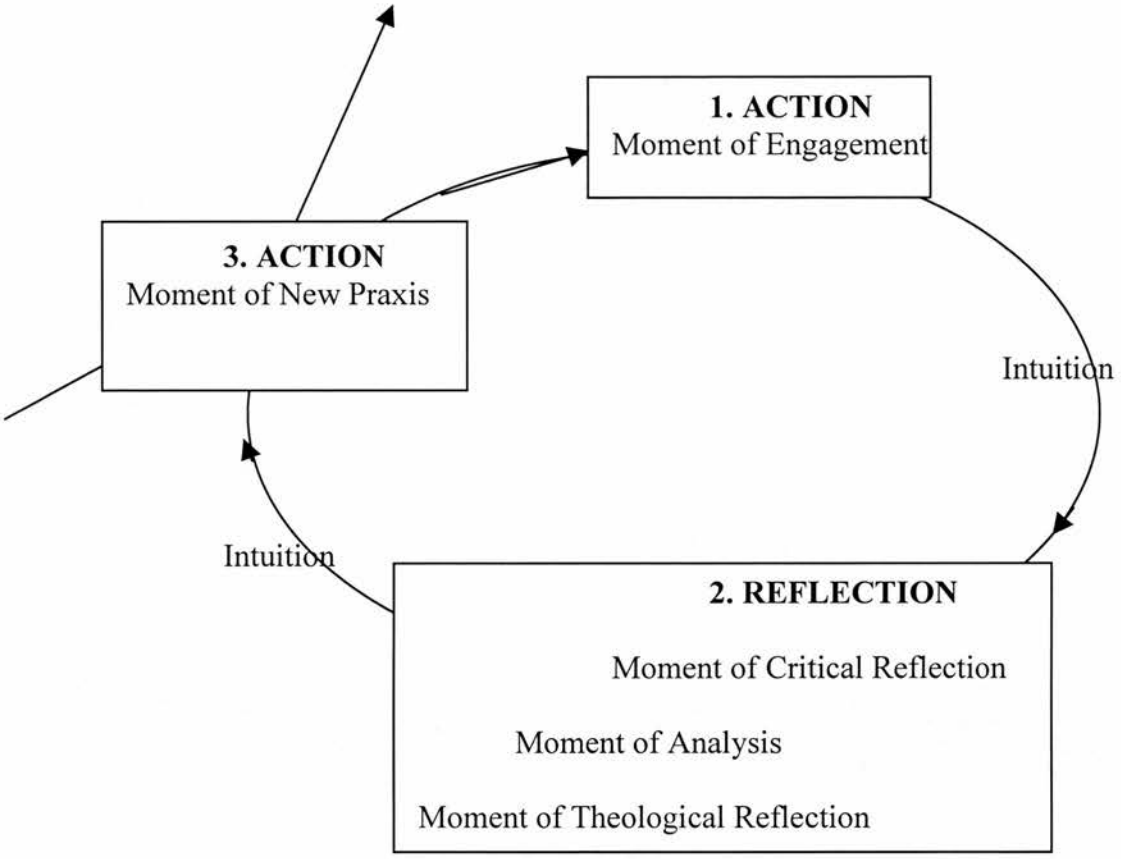


Diagram 2 Phases and Moments of a Caribbean Theological Methodology

PHASE 1: ACTION

The first action phase consists of a single moment which could be called the **moment of engagement**. In this phase, the concrete reality is experienced in real life encounters. It is this that ignites the process of doing theology and which might bring the appropriateness of current praxis into question. In the case of this study, the experiences of pastoral ministry and school chaplaincy were for me moments of engagement which initialised the process as the following case studies illustrate.

> Not long after taking up office as pastor of a small inner-city congregation, I met Trish.[60] She was one of the most faithful in attendance, at just about every event of the church. I found out that although she wanted to become a member, she was not yet one. When I eventually got around to asking her why, she told me that she and her partner Vincent, with whom she lived, were not married and that he was reluctant to 'tie the knot'. I visited them at their home and discussed the relationship together and offered my assistance and support at whatever time they felt ready to take their relationship to the next stage. Trish continued to participate in church life and I encouraged her to become a part of the new members' class. It was the church's policy however, that persons living together in non-marital unions should not be admitted into membership. It was therefore not until six months later after I had married Trish and Vincent that she was received into membership. It was like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders.

Pastoral dilemmas like these raised questions about the appropriateness of the common policy of churches towards persons living in non-marital unions.

In much the same way, as part of the Guidance and Counselling Department, there were occasions when I would often have to deal personally with children with academic or behavioural problems. Cindy was one of them:

> Behavioural problems and poor academic performance had caused her, a fourteen-year-old high school student, to be recommended to the Guidance and Counselling Department for close supervision. As I explored these issues with Cindy, she shared how she was distracted from her schoolwork by a preoccupation with wanting to meet her father whom she had never met. She expressed deep feelings of rejection and disappointment at not knowing him. She cried as she talked about her mother's refusal to facilitate any contact with her father, a graphic expression of the pain she was experiencing. Some months later, she came to me most excited one morning after school assembly to inform me that she had finally spoken with her father for the first time. The joy and elation evident on her smiling face, contrasted sharply with the tears of sadness in my earlier encounter with her.

It was common for the teachers at the high school to make the point that one could tell what kind of family a child came from by their behaviour at school. Yet the examination oriented education system and the way some teachers dealt with those

---

[60] In each of these real cases, the names of persons were substituted with fictitious ones to preserve confidentiality.

children, with little regard for the impact of potentially traumatic family experiences, might only have served to reinforce that trauma and did not seem to follow from the connection they made between family experiences and behaviour. It seemed that a different approach was needed.

Experiences with situations like Cindy's, illustrated the important link between one's experience of family and one's social and emotional well-being. It also led me to wonder what might be behind the patterns of family in Jamaica characterised by high levels of father absence. Moreover, I speculated about how churches could work towards improving the quality of family life for more people like Cindy. As part of this, churches might be able to work alongside the school community in developing more appropriate ways of working with children whose academic performance and behaviour might be affected by their experiences of family life.

To illustrate the place of intuition in the process, consider these two cases mentioned above. The sensing that something was inappropriate about an age old church policy or that an alternative approach to family and family issues might more authentically represent the cause of the gospel were in part an intuitive experience. It was not entirely a rational cognitive process. It was a feeling; one that was more than empathy, for it carried with it the sense that finding alternative responses was akin to a divine imperative. Even if it was not possible to articulate what was wrong, there was a sensing that there was a response that would be more holistic and more congruent with the mandate of the gospel. This intuitive knowing could rightly be described as a hermeneutic of suspicion and became part of the stimulus for theological enquiry.

PHASE 2: REFLECTION

The second phase in this interpretation of doing theology is that of reflection, which could be seen as involving three moments. There is the **moment of critical reflection**, which is practically inseparable from the moment of engagement. As one is engaged in the concrete situation, one simultaneously assesses critically one's praxis and the theological underpinning for it. Moreover, one becomes more aware of the realities of the wider context and assesses how current praxis meets the needs of the situation. As the realities and experiences of families in the community I

served were considered, I became aware of the inadequacy of current family praxis and unsure about the relevance of the theological understanding of family with which I operated. There was a need moreover, to understand the context better if a more relevant praxis was to be found.

It is the need for a fuller understanding of the context that leads to the next step, the **moment of analysis**. With the support of relevant tools of analysis, the context or particular aspects of it are more fully explored. It is here that the use of empirical research may be a valuable component in the process.

The next step is the **moment of theological reflection** that brings together in critical correlation, the insights and questions thrown up by the analysis, the normative sources of the faith and the insights from other disciplines. Doing theology is dialogical. That is, there is an ongoing interaction between more than one source of information in which each source contributes to a clarification of the other and to a more complete understanding of what is being explored. Ultimately, one is seeking to articulate how the dialogue between these sources informs Christian action in obedience to God. In relation to this study, it was important not just to understand family life better but to explore what constituted appropriate 'Christian action in obedience to God.'

Again to illustrate how intuition may be a part of the moment of theological reflection. The correlation of insights gained from various theological and non-theological sources, uncovers points of similarities as well as points of apparently irreconcilable tensions. They may also stir considerations of new understandings and approaches to families. At such times, it is often an intuitive intervention that uncovers a new way of understanding scripture or a reworking of the family theology that provides some resolution and a way forward for an appropriate praxis. Surely, such intuition needs to be tested but it holds the key to an understanding of how the process can truly be considered as contemporary revelation and how one can speak of responding in obedience to what God may be saying today.

The present study has sought to understand inner-city family life as it is expressed in the Caribbean. It has also critically assessed the churches' present way of working with these families. In practical terms, this has meant undertaking empirical field

research involving a community case study in an inner-city community along with various interviews conducted in Jamaica over a four-month period. Details of these will be outlined in the next section. The study then engaged in a hermeneutical process which drew upon the findings of the case study and interviews, contemporary family theology, pastoral theology, non-theological disciplines such as psychology, family-related social policy in Jamaica as well as biblical themes and passages.

In relation to the use of scripture, the wide scope and exploratory nature of the study have meant that the biblical themes and passages could not be analysed with all the rigours of a historical critical approach by the researcher. However, they are examined with the assistance of current biblical scholarship that uses such approaches. Out of this process, in the present study, emerged a biblically grounded family theology.

PHASE 3: ACTION

The final phase in the process again has one step, the **moment of new praxis**. This is a return to action but this time with a praxis that is considered more appropriate to the contextual and contemporary realities which nevertheless has biblical warrant. Based on the theological framework from the previous moment and with reference to the needs and concerns identified in the field research, this phase identifies more specifically the response that is necessary in the interest of the Gospel and for the advancement of the vision of emancipation. It is the enactment of the mission of God by the community of faith in the here and now. This phase of the study draws on the writings of contemporary pastoral theologians as well as the findings from the field research to uncover the attitudes and presuppositions that should under-gird churches' pastoral response to inner-city families in Jamaica.

As helpful as formulations of theological methodology are, they often run the risk of seeming too mechanical. The formulation offered here is not intended to be exact and mechanical, but is a guide to a thoroughly hermeneutical process that defies exact detailing. It is therefore not without its limitations and problems some of which are important to highlight.

SOME LIMITATIONS IN THE THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Firstly, as an interpretive process, doing theology cannot be an exact science. The various attempts to systematise the process can give the false impression that it can deliver foolproof interpretation. What is more, theological interpretation is made more difficult by the limitations of human thought and language. The attempts to translate divine transcendent reality into human categories have inherent limitations. Because of this, the theologian must be committed to due rigour and a methodical approach, particularly with an academic project such as this. It is for this reason why a clear theological methodology has been adopted for the study and the fieldwork component carefully designed. Details of this will be given in the next section.

Secondly, there are inevitably subjective elements of a partly human process. There is, as Panton points out, the inherent conditioning that the theologian brings to the process, for instance one's idea of what is an 'ideal' family. [61] In light of this, I have operated throughout the study with the conscious awareness that family structuring and dynamics are cultural things. An attempt was made to be informed about and by the culture of the people being described in the process of theologising. Moreover, feedback on the findings of the research was sought from various sources including those in the context.

Thirdly, the effect of the researcher on the setting or the participants in the study was an unavoidable threat to the validity of the findings and conclusions. Although this cannot be eliminated, being aware of the likely effect allowed for a more sensitive interaction with participants. There was the awareness, for example, that I did not live in the community and had a middle class upbringing. This could have led participants to see me as a privileged outsider not worthy of the information I sought. In addition, I was a minister in one of the older denominations with possible associations with norms and values of institutionalised religion, higher social classes and liberal theological leanings. These had implications for interaction not just with non-church participants but also with those from newer and more conservative denominations. In addition, in the interaction with female participants, I was conscious of gender dynamics that could have influenced the nature of our

---

[61] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), p. 41.

interaction. Apart from a heightened sensitivity these threats were addressed by an informal presentation in my dress and manner and by use of the local vernacular to reduce the likely sense of class and status differences. One advantage of the association with the churches however, was that I became a 'soft target' for them to direct their criticisms and this allowed for a richer analysis of their perspectives on the Church's theology and pastoral practice.

Fourthly, there is an absence in much of the literature on practical theology from non-Western perspectives in general and from the Caribbean in particular. This has limited the insights on methodology to mainly European and North American perspectives. It is possible that this might limit the attempts of the study to be truly contextual. The inclusion of an emancipatory emphasis and the explicit value of intuition are attempts to reflect more contextually appropriate insights and sources of knowledge. As this study illustrates, this absence in the literature was not necessarily because of the absence of theological reflection or praxis in the Caribbean. Very often, doing theology long precedes speaking or writing about one's theology.

Having described the broad outline of the theological methodology of this research project and having noted some limitations, the details of the field research undertaken will be presented in the next section.

SECTION 2.4 FIELD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

The field research was conducted between mid April to August 2001 in Jamaica. It adopted a case study strategy and took as its research site an inner-city community in Kingston, Jamaica. Case study research has been defined as 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomena within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.'[62] Case studies are preferred when the purpose of the research is primarily exploratory, when the phenomenon being studied is integrally linked to its context, when the researcher has limited control over the phenomenon and when the issue is contemporary. It tends to make use of multiple sources of evidence and, in its choice of data collection strategies, is more concerned with obtaining detailed data than it is with the representativeness and 'generalisability' of its findings. As such, case study is more concerned both in its sampling considerations and applications of its findings with the 'cogency of theoretical reasoning'[63] and less with statistical logic.

Taking the target community as its 'case,' it used mainly qualitative methods to analyse and compare the perceptions and experiences of inner-city residents about family, with those of members who attended churches within the same community. It also sought to explore the dynamics of how the churches responded to the perceived needs and concerns of families in the target community. Although the case study could be considered the centrepiece of the field research and therefore the primary site for data, it was necessary to augment this with other relevant data collected 'off site' mainly in the form of interviews.

---

[62] C. Robson, *Real World Research* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 5.

[63] Mitchell quoted by H. Rose in G. Skinner and C. Allan, Eds., *Handbook for Research Students in the Social Sciences* (London: Falmer, 1991), p. 193.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

COMPONENTS OF THE FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT

The field research had two primary components. One aspect was the case study involving:

- Focus groups made up of residents and others consisting of members of churches in the community.
- In-depth unstructured interviews of one single parent and one common-law family.
- Interviews with pastors in the community.

The other component involved interviews with selected sociologists, family researchers, theologians/pastors, family workers and policy makers.

PHASES OF THE PROCESS

The research process spanned two phases. The first concentrated on entry into the target community and establishment of relationships with informants and key figures. During this phase, the researcher sought to identify community leaders, spokespersons or community representatives who were more familiar with the community and could therefore identify suitable contacts, help with recruiting focus group participants and offer ongoing assistance to the researcher.

The researcher also met with representatives from two agencies who had recently done research in the area. Both agencies were able to provide valuable background information about the community and contacts for community leaders. Some of the information from their findings are incorporated in the next chapter. The leadership of the most prominent non-government development agency operating in the area was consulted and preliminary meetings were attended of another, which had recently begun work in the community. In addition, initial discussions with leaders of the Ministers' Fraternal secured their support along with the fourteen congregations

represented.[64] Other community leaders and groups contacted included three community based organisations, three youth clubs, two sports clubs and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of a local all-age and junior high school.

The second phase focussed on data gathering. During this phase, some sixteen focus groups were conducted. Four of these were repeated sessions because of the low turnout in the initial groups. Information for repeat groups was combined so that there was data for all twelve groups that were originally projected. In addition, in-depth interviews were carried out with two community families. Throughout the period, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with six parish ministers in the community from a range of denominations, and with fourteen specialists from various fields. Further details of these participants and the rationale for their selection are considered below under recruitment and selection of participants.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Qualitative methods were used for the field research. These took the form of focus group discussions and individual interviews as the primary means of gathering data.

In recent years, the use of focus groups has become a popular tool for qualitative data collection. The focus group may be defined as, 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment.'[65] The focus group is usually composed of five to ten participants who are selected because of some common characteristics they have in relation to the topic being discussed. The discussion is usually conducted by a skilled moderator who seeks to maximise the level of interaction among participants around a particular topic. The focus groups were on site. Individual interviews were done both for on site and off site data gathering.

Robson suggests the following advantages of interviews especially if they are done face-to-face. These are applicable both to the focus group and individual interviews:

---

[64] The Ministers' Fraternal, as they are commonly called in Jamaica, is an association of ministers and church workers from different churches within a particular geographical region which often fosters and coordinates ecumenical activities in that area.

[65] R. Kreuger, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (London, Sage, 1994), p. 6.

1. Flexibility and adaptability.
2. The unique window that language offers to our understanding of our actions.
3. The possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, follow-up interesting responses and investigate underlying motives.
4. Non-verbal cues help the understanding of verbal responses.
5. It has the potential for providing rich and illuminating material.[66]

The use of these data gathering methods allowed the researcher to probe attitudes and values that could not be captured by quantitative means as well as for the collection of data that reflected the complexity of the phenomena being studied. By using multi-sources, the study sought to achieve some measure of triangulation. This refers to the use of more than one method of data collection to increase the validity of one's findings.[67] Conversely, Robson notes that interviewing is prone to bias and can raise concerns about reliability. In an effort to minimise this, a topic guide was used for both focus groups and individual interviews.[68] In addition, each interview was taped to ensure a reliable record. A brief summary of each interview was also written which identified any factors that might have affected the reliability of the data collected.

Focus group discussions and interviews were chosen as the main means of data collection firstly because of the complex, contextual and exploratory nature of the research topic. Focus groups are particularly useful when seeking the views and perspectives about some experience, idea, event or product and these were helpful means for the exploration of how people saw and experienced family life. It also allowed some degree of Watty's 'vital communication and intensive participation in the life of people' referred to in section 2.2 (see p. 79), which was desirable for an increased empathy and understanding of the people in it. Moreover, the experiential nature of the data gathering increased the intuitive sensing of the research participants' reality. Focus groups and interviews therefore facilitated the intuitive aspect of the theological methodology as well as honoured the notion of the participants being agents of God's revelation.

---

[66] C. Robson, *Real World Research* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 229.

[67] R. Burns, *Introduction to Research Methods* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 419.

[68] See Appendix 11-A to11-E, pp. 338-343.

Secondly, my training and experience in counselling and small group work were other considerations in choosing these techniques. These equipped me with some of the skills required for these methods. This allowed a more confident approach to the task of data gathering and increased the quality of the data collected than if methods were used for which I had no related skills.

Thirdly, the choice of data collection methods was also influenced by the limited time available for field research. In the four and a half months that were allotted to this, it would have been impossible to attempt methods such as participant observation, which would require all that time just to be accepted into the community being studied.

The final consideration was funding. On a limited budget, the use of individual and focus group interviews helped to keep cost to a minimum and yet produced suitable data for answering the research questions.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

In order to facilitate comparison between the perspectives of residents and those of church members, parallel discussions were conducted for each group type. Groups were gender specific and divided according to common life stages and family-related experiences into three age categories 13-18, 19-25 and 26-40. For each group type (community or church member), there were therefore three male categories and three female categories. For each age/gender category (for example, church: male 13-18), one focus group was planned, giving a total of twelve focus groups (six community and six church members). In all, ninety-three participants were involved but more will be said about them in the next chapter when the findings are presented.

Participants for the community groups were required to be residents who did not attend any of the churches in the community more often than once per month. For the church groups, participants had to be members or active adherents in one of the churches in the community, who attended once per month or more, but did not have to live in the community. Eleven churches were contacted to provide participants for

the church groups, while seven community organisations were asked to recruit members for the resident groups.

Initially, each organisation was asked to recruit two participants for each age/gender category from which not more than twelve participants per group were to be selected so as to ensure that various family forms were represented while preserving a manageable group size.

This approach had to be reconsidered because of the difficulties in identifying personnel from some community organisations to do the recruitment. This was exacerbated by the community's history of intra-community gang violence, which made prospective participants cautious about the location of focus groups and suspicious about where other participants were from. As a compromise, three organisations that had members from different sections of the community agreed to provide a core number (at least five) of participants for two focus groups each. One organisation was able to recruit participants for both the male and female groups in the 13-18 age category, another recruited most of the participants for the females aged 26-40 (which was supplemented by participants recruited through a local PTA) and males aged 19-25. A third organisation recruited participants for the female groups aged 19-25 and males aged 26-40.

A similar strategy had to be adopted for some of the churches' focus groups as well because of the low turnout in the first few meetings. Because of the approach to recruiting in all of the groups, some of the participants knew each other and in at least two groups, some participants were from the same family (no more than two participants in each case) or lived very close to each other. It is difficult to say for sure how this might have affected the data but there were no obvious signs of this having any adverse effect on participation in the group.

COMMUNITY PASTORS

The primary considerations in selecting the community pastors to be interviewed were denominational spread, experience, size of their congregation, level of community involvement and accessibility. A desire to have different gender perspectives was also considered. Six pastors were interviewed, each from a different

denomination in the community. Most were part of the Ministers' Fraternal and so were accessible through its leadership. The pastors were chosen to reflect a range of experiences in the community. Two had been working in the community for less than three years but most had been there for over five years. The congregations of each pastor demonstrated different levels of community engagement but all expressed an interest in the churches' involvement in the community. The size of their congregations varied from approximately one hundred to six hundred members. Those interviewed included the only female minister in the Fraternal and pastors of some of the larger churches with the greatest potential for impacting the community.

CASE STUDY FAMILIES

Extended interviews were conducted with two families in the community. Both family interviews were done after the focus groups had been completed and were considered as supplementary data. The families were chosen on the basis of what participants in the focus groups indicated were the most prominent family forms in the community. These were common-law and single parent/extended - that is, a single parent living in an extended family household. The female partner in the common-law union had participated in one of the focus groups and agreed to have her family interviewed. Another focus group participant had recommended the single mother who agreed to be interviewed when contacted. In this case, the single parent and her children lived with her mother.

SPECIALISTS

These specialists were selected on the basis of their expertise in sociology, counselling, theology, government policy, interest or research in family life issues as well as accessibility. Attempts were also made to reflect different gender perspectives. In all, a quarter of those interviewed were females. All the sociologists were prominent lecturers at the University of the West Indies who had done research in the area of family life. The theologians were selected from four different denominations and included renowned Caribbean theologians, lecturers, pastors and a pastoral theologian who had done seminal research on the church and common-law unions. The counsellors interviewed, represented a range of experience in counselling, psychiatry and family therapy. One interviewee worked with the

Ministry of Education and was responsible for the health and family life education programme in schools and was selected for her knowledge of government policy related to the family. The breakdown of the number of interviews conducted with these specialists was as follows:

Sociologists	3	Theologians	6
Counsellors	4	Government Personnel	1

CONDUCT OF FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Focus groups were usually scheduled for weekday or Saturday evenings and lasted between two and three hours. Before the start of the group, participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire for background information and to ensure that they met the criteria for the group.[69] The researcher moderated all the groups with the aid of a standard topic guide which was prepared in chart form for the participants to see.[70] An assistant moderator observed the group and noted any significant non-verbal communication, the order of the discussion as well as responses to some key questions such as those that required participants to vote. A technician ensured that for each group the full discussion was recorded and these were later transcribed. The focus group discussions were translated into English from the Jamaican vernacular with which most of the participants spoke.

The in-depth interviews were conducted at the homes of the families and lasted between two and three hours. They involved the whole family but most of the interview was focused on the adults. In an effort to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere no structured topic guide was used, however similar information was sought from each family.[71] In each case the discussion was recorded and later transcribed.

For the interviews with community pastors and selected experts, a flexible semi-structured topic guide was used which could be amended slightly depending on the

---

[69] See Appendix 1-A to1-B, pp. 334-337.

[70] See Appendix 11-A, pp. 338-339.

[71] See Appendix 11-B, p. 340.

interviewee.[72] The interviews normally lasted about an hour and twenty minutes and were usually conducted at the office or home of the interviewees. These too were recorded and transcribed.

SOME LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the research might be limited by the following factors that could have affected the data gathering.

Firstly, the researcher's bias caused by preconceived values or the fact that I was operating in my home context might have been a factor. In an effort to limit this, I chose a community in which I had no previous involvement.

Secondly, in July 2001, politically related violence flared up in various sections of Kingston including the target community. This had an effect on recruitment for the focus groups and led to the postponement of some groups. This led to a change of strategy for recruiting participants (see above), which may have resulted in smaller numbers and less representation across the community. The flare up of violence also created a concern about safety in the community. As a precaution my presence in the community was limited to specific data gathering events.

Thirdly, the fact that some participants knew each other might also have made them more cautious about sharing personal material. However, the feedback from participants and observation of the dynamics within the groups suggest that for the most part, people were open about their views and experiences.

Fourthly, the sample size was relatively small and individual group numbers in at least one case was below the optimum number of five participants. (The group of community males in the age group 13-18 had four members instead of five or more). Moreover, each group ideally should have been duplicated but the limited time allotted for the project did not allow for this. The findings of the research nonetheless provide valuable insights as an exploratory piece of work.

---

[72] See Appendix 11-C to 11-E, pp. 341-343.

Fifthly, the age range of the sample could have excluded the family-related concerns faced by older persons. However, given the youthfulness of the population, the age focus does have some justification. In 1998, 37.3 per cent of the population was under eighteen years.[73] In addition, the age range covered in the study is likely to experience most of the family-related concerns experienced by inner-city families.

Sixthly, cancellation of some scheduled interviews may also have limited the findings. Most significant of these were an interview with a married family in the community and with the priest of the only Roman Catholic Church. In the first case, this would have provided information to allow for a fuller contrast of the diverse family experiences in the community. In the second case, the priest was a very active figure in the community and therefore could speak from that experience. In addition, his input would have provided another denominational perspective. Also an attempt to repeat the community males 13-18 group had to be aborted because of the disruptive behaviour of the participants.

Seventhly, because of the research that had been done in preparation for a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored community development programme, there was a concern that the residents might be unwilling to participate due to research fatigue. In dialogue with the agencies that were coordinating the development project, it was established that the participants to be recruited would not necessarily have been involved in previous research. Additionally, there was the feeling that this project, while complementary, was sufficiently different not to cause any conflict of interests.

Eighthly, there was some concern about how a close association with the churches in the community might affect people's response to me and, in turn, the information received. To address this concern, it was arranged with the Ministers' Fraternal for me to make contacts with the groups in the community as an independent researcher.

---

[73] S. Cameron and H. Ricketts, *Changing the Future for Jamaica's Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1999), p. 3.

CONCLUSION

The study that was undertaken can be located within the area of practical theology. It was influenced by current trends in this field towards a more practical paradigm for theology as a whole. In addition, this study was all about 'doing theology' contextually. As such, it was grounded within a Caribbean theological methodology that is informed by the action-reflection-action dynamic, correlation and the use of scriptures which are common to other contemporary approaches to 'doing theology.' The value of intuition and an emancipatory orientation in a Caribbean methodology have also been highlighted in this chapter. Moreover, an attempt was made to apply this framework to an outline of the steps in the process of this particular research project.

The study is also interdisciplinary and enlists the use of qualitative case study research as an ally in the process of theological inquiry. Having outlined the theological methodology and the design by which the field research was conducted, in the next chapter, the findings of the field research will be presented.

CHAPTER 3
LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we come to what has been previously described in Chapter two as the **moment of analysis**. At this juncture, an understanding of the context is being sought with the help of empirical research. This project is committed to giving a voice to the participants in the case study as an integral part of discerning the context of ministry engagement. I wish to 'let the people speak' through the findings of the case study research conducted in the target community, which for the purpose of anonymity will be called Cross Town.

The focus groups are taken as the main data source for the case study analysis but throughout the chapter, reference will be made to other interviews that were conducted both on site and off site.[1] These are taken as supplementary data and will not be presented as separate findings. This chapter will be presented in five sections.

The first section introduces the target community explaining the reasons for its selection and outlining some features that typify an inner-city community.

In the second section, a summary of the focus group participants' profile is given as well as their experiences of family life. Their experiences will allow some comparisons to be made between the two sets of participants.

The third section will present a summary of the main findings from the focus group data. This will compare the responses of church members with residents in the community and draw significant conclusions about their perspectives of family under four headings.

---

[1] See Appendix V1, p. 392.

- PERCEPTIONS OF A FAMILY: will summarise the participants' definitions on what family means.
- PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY: will look at participants' views about families in Cross Town.
- GOD'S VISION VERSUS THE CHURCH'S VISION: captures a comparison of the participants' impressions of God's vision of families in Cross Town with what they think is the Church's vision of them.
- VIEWS ON THE CHURCH: this is a presentation of the participants' opinions of churches in Cross Town, how they have responded and need to respond to the issues of family life in the community.

The fourth section of the chapter will take a close look at two families in the community as a way of illustrating some of the findings of the focus groups as well as giving a more in-depth perspective on the experiences of family life of inner-city residents.

In the final section, the significant conclusions arising from the research and the answers they point to for the research questions being explored will be discussed.

SECTION 3.1 CROSS TOWN

In Jamaica, the neighbouring geographical parishes of Kingston and St Andrew constitute the Island's centre of government, business, education and culture. Kingston and St Andrew are referred to collectively as the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) and for all intents and purposes function as one geographical and political parish. The KMA is residentially stratified with the higher income groups living in the suburbs, away from the coast and the lower income groups living mainly along or near the waterfront. These lower income communities are home to the poor and destitute where they live in substandard and overcrowded housing. Although the most prominent pockets of urban poverty are in fact closer to the waterfront, a few miles out of the reach of the nearest middle class areas, some poor neighbourhoods are found distributed throughout the well-developed middle and upper income residential communities across the KMA. Cross Town, covering an area of approximately five square miles, is one of these. One community pastor stated:

> *CP 4:* *This general area is quite unusual in that, it is a largish inner-city type community, but situated outside of the main inner-city communities. We are surrounded by a lot of middle class and even upper class areas but quite a considerable area of low income and what people would call ghetto communities, garrison communities.*
>
> (See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 396).

Like poetic irony these neighbouring communities mirror how the two worlds coexist side by side and accentuated the gulf in living conditions that exists in Jamaica between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.'

WHY CROSS TOWN

A pertinent question one might ask is, why choose Cross Town as the target community? Firstly, as the description below will indicate, Cross Town typifies as an inner-city community and as such fulfilled a primary criterion for selection.

Secondly, there were well-established community groups with which I could work and through which I could do my recruiting for the focus group discussions, which were the main means of data gathering.

Thirdly, the presence of a functioning Ministers' Fraternal meant possible access to congregations for the recruitment of church participants for the focus groups.[2] I was careful about too close an association with any one church, but felt that a close working relationship with the Fraternal would help to legitimise my entrance into the community.

A fourth consideration was the potential of the community to benefit from the research. The presence of the Fraternal increased the prospect of follow-up on the findings of the research. Also, from talking with some of the ministers it seemed evident that some of them had an orientation towards greater involvement of the churches within the community. Additionally, the community had recently been selected for a special USAID funded development programme which meant that interested groups in the community could obtain funding for relevant community development programmes. It was thought that churches in the community might be more willing to initiate family life programmes for which funding was more easily available.

Fifthly, in preparation for the USAID development project, some research had been conducted in the community which could be accessed for valuable background information that would not be as readily available for other communities.

Finally, Cross Town was just ten minutes drive from my home, thereby allowing quick and regular access to the community. In what follows the basic features of Cross Town are described.[3]

---

[2] For an explanation of the term 'Ministers' Fraternal', see Footnote 64 in Chapter 2, p. 98.

[3] Information in this section is based on research conducted in Jamaica in 1999 and supplied by the Social Development Commission (SDC) which is a government department involved in community development.

FEATURES OF CROSS TOWN

POPULATION

Cross Town has an estimated population of six to eight thousand residents. This includes forty-four per cent males and fifty-six per cent females. The population is relatively youthful with almost seventy-five per cent of the population being under the age of thirty-five.

Single parents or guardians, most of whom are females, lead almost forty-five per cent of households. Single females who are widows and divorcees head another six per cent of these households. Persons in married unions head another twenty-five per cent of households, while persons in common-law unions lead twenty-four per cent of the households.

EMPLOYMENT

Most of the heads of households are working in craft and related trades or in unskilled occupations. Most working persons are employed as domestic helpers, factory workers, construction workers, common labourers or entry-level workers at garages, hardware stores and commercial trades. Only sixty-three per cent of the labour force are working full time, part time or seasonally. One of the positives about its proximity to middle and upper income communities is that it offers employment opportunities for many in Cross Town who work as domestic helpers.

Most working persons received a regular income, which on average is under J$2400 (£37) per week.[4] Many others have to live on irregular work-related incomes and some receive income from various other sources. According to the Social Development Commission (SDC), approximately thirty-one per cent of the families in the community said they receive financial help from family and friends but the amounts and regularity were not explicitly stated. Unemployment affects an estimated thirty-two per cent of the heads of households in the community and this is

---

[4] Exchange rate at the time of the research was £1=J$65.00.

not without its repercussions for family life. The general indication therefore is that income levels are low and unemployment is high.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Cross Town has an estimated 1,420 households occupying 835 housing structures with an average size of approximately six persons per household which is higher than the national average of four. Overcrowding in the homes is a problem and most homes are in poor condition. Most of the residents live in family owned or rental units.

There is varying access to utility services in Cross Town. Although public transportation is available to the residents, the service is considered poor. There is a good supply of electricity with ninety-six per cent of the households having electricity. Approximately seventy-four per cent of households have line telephones in their homes and receive good service. Recently, with the introduction of various mobile phone packages, more residents have also acquired access to mobile phones.

Domestic water is available in poor supply; fifty-three per cent have water piped into their yards, thirty-eight per cent have water piped into the dwelling, six per cent use a communal standpipe and three per cent rely on water they catch by means other than from the public water supply. Some of the residents have to rely on more than one method of obtaining water for domestic purposes. Most of the drains in the community are clean and in very good condition. However, there are still others that are in need of repair and are blocked with various debris. Garbage skips are placed along major thoroughfares in the community to facilitate central garbage collection. However, residents who border the gullies in the area continue to use them to dispose of much of their waste. Most families have inside toilets while others use pit latrines. In some cases, sanitary conveniences are shared by as many as four households. Most of the residents have and use proper means of excreta disposal and therefore this does not present any threat to sanitation within the community.

Recreational facilities are limited in the community with only one recognised play field in fairly good condition. The most popular recreational activities shared with

family members include watching television, listening to the radio or music, reading, playing sports or going on excursions.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Cross Town has nine schools ranging from pre-primary to junior high. These and other levels of education may be easily accessed from other institutions outside of the community. The school age population is concentrated below the tertiary level of education and most persons living in the community have received some secondary level education. However there is a high number of school dropouts and very few persons go on to pursue tertiary levels of education. Some have benefited from training and development programmes offered by government agencies. A smaller number of persons are in pursuit of vocational training at other institutions.

HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

There is a health centre situated in the community but it is in a poor condition. Most of the residents rely on the services offered from this health centre. According to the SDC research, fifty-three per cent of the residents say they do not experience any problems in obtaining health services. Private health services and hospitals are also consulted, though not as frequently as the health centre. Yet fewer residents rely on the services offered by the Community Health Aids and non- government organizations (NGOs) such as churches in the area. Major health problems affect forty-one per cent of the households in the community. Many residents feel that there is the need for more health centres and they have also expressed concern for more children to be immunized.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

A community pastor who was interviewed described the community as 'fractured.' There are fissions that divide the neighbourhood into various sub-communities. Although the community is one area, residents see their particular roads, avenues or lanes as individual communities. Many of the community pastors referred to this:

CP 1: *I find what I thought was a homogenous community, but when I started hearing about ....the different places I wondered if it's the same place that I heard of when I came here in 1994/95. It seems a very diverse community with a number of imaginary lines...*

(See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 393).

CP 3: *However, from the talk of the people within the community and in terms of their movement, it is very apparent that there are sub-communities with defined political differences and even in terms of certain behaviour patterns and so on. There are definitely differences which one can observe and which one has heard about within the community.*

(See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 395).

CP 4: *The community is very fractured as a community. People who drive through would see blocks of inner-city type community areas but they are sharply divided - politically with very clear boundaries between certain parts of it. So within this broad community are sub-communities that are divided along political lines.*

(See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 397).

As these last quotes make apparent, much of the fragmentation is politically related. Different sections of the community bear strong allegiance to one or other of the two major political parties in the country. The reality of scarce benefits and a political culture known for its factionalism means that politicians tend to look out for their own. The 'clientelist' political culture referred to in Chapter one, which makes fierce allegiance a matter of survival, is very evident in Cross Town.[5] This, coupled with

[5] See Chapter 1, Section 1.1 under the heading - Chains and Freedom after Emancipation, p. 8.

the increase in activity related to drug trafficking and the influx of illegal guns, has led to an escalation of crime and violence in the community. According to Development Options' community profile:

> *Despite peace initiatives, real and perceived high levels of sporadic crime, violence and gang warfare have plagued the several sub-communities that comprise the area. Between 1997 and 1998, there were forty murders, eleven curfews, six drug related raids, nine reported rapes and four woundings. The unpredictable, intense, sporadic violence over the years has made it difficult for entrepreneurs, residents and external resources to make inroads in addressing the socio-economic issues facing the community.*[6]

Its location on the doorsteps of the middle and upper class communities has meant that Cross Town receives more than its fair share of negative media coverage and police surveillance. The stigmatisation, associated with the high incidence of crime and violence, has affected the community's self image and cohesion, with one of the results being the reluctance of companies to employ workers from the area. So not only is unemployment high but there are significant challenges residents face when seeking employment.

There are a number of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) which enjoy different levels of functioning. It is estimated that thirty-five to fifty per cent of the residents participate in CBOs and/or events organized by them.[7] In addition, the residents of Cross Town receive social and professional services from youth clubs, church-related organizations, community services and service clubs.

---

[6] Development Options, "Community Profile," (Kingston, Jamaica, Development Options, 2000).
[7] Ibid.

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

At least twenty-two congregations serve Cross Town from a range of denominations. These include the Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, traditional protestant churches, evangelical, traditional Pentecostal, Charismatic and Revivalist.[8] Ministers and church workers from fifteen of the congregations in the community are involved in the Ministers' Fraternal. Though they organise occasional joint activities involving their congregations, there is no ongoing ecumenical community project. However, some individual congregations have their own community outreach projects and because of the high community participation (sixty-five per cent), the churches enjoy a fair amount of community support.

SUMMARY

This then is the community of Cross Town - an inner-city community located in the midst of affluence and divided by political and gang rivalry. It was in this community that the research was conducted. As the findings will show Cross Town was to confirm much of what is outlined about family in Chapter one and to yield valuable insights for the process of theological reflection. It became evident that the legacy of slavery continues to have profound effects on family phenomena in an inner-city community such as this. So too do the issues of economics, scarce resources, crime and violence. In the next section a profile of the focus group participants will be presented.

---

[8] Syncretistic indigenous religious groups based on Christianity with pseudo-African retentions.

SECTION 3.2 PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

THE SAMPLE

The focus group sample comprised ninety-three persons distributed across the three age groupings 13-18, 19-25 and 26-40 years. The breakdown by age and gender is set out in the table below.

TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS BY AGE AND GENDER

(n=93)

AGE-GROUP	MALES			FEMALES		
	Church	**Community**	**Combined**	**Church**	**Community**	**Combined**
13-18	8	4	**12**	9	6	**15**
19-25	8	5	**13**	6	7	**13**
26-40	12	9	**21**	10	9	**19**
TOTAL	**28**	**18**	**46**	**25**	**22**	**47**

As Table 2 indicates, most of the church groups had more participants than the corresponding community groups. The sample had approximately equal numbers of male and female participants. The majority of the participants were in the 26-40 age group, accounting for almost half of the total sample.

Below is a description of participants in terms of pertinent demographic variables. With the help of these indices the socio-economic status of the participants was compared.

INDICES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR 13-18 PARTICIPANTS

In Jamaica, formal public education begins at about age four at the primary (government run) or preparatory (privately run) schools. The literacy progress of students is assessed throughout their primary/preparatory schooling and at age ten to twelve this involves sitting the General Schools Achievement Test (GSAT) for placement into secondary schools. All-Age and Junior High Schools cater for children in the age range five to seventeen years. Children who have performed unsatisfactorily in the GSAT examinations continue their education in the upper grades of the All-Age and Junior High Schools. Table 3 shows the schools attended by teen participants.

TABLE 3 SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY 13-18 YEAR OLD PARTICIPANTS

(n=27)

SCHOOLS	CHURCH		COMMUNITY		COMBINED
	M	F	M	F	
All-Age/Junior High	6	4	3	4	17
Secondary	2	5	1	2	10
				-	-
TOTAL	**8**	**9**	**4**	**6**	**27**

- Of the twenty-seven teenagers in this group, most (seventeen) were attending All-Age and Junior High Schools.
- Church females were the only group in which the majority of its participants had attended secondary schools.
- None of the participants in this age group was attending tertiary institutions and none was employed.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGE GROUPS 19-25 AND 26-40

This refers to the category of jobs held by the participants. Similar types of jobs were grouped together and the categories arranged in order of pay level with those attracting the highest salaries at the top. Table 4 shows the occupational status of participants between nineteen and forty.

TABLE 4 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS BY AGE AND GENDER

(n=66)

CATEGORIES	AGE GROUP 19-25				AGE GROUP 26-40			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Church	Com	Church	Com.	Church	Com.	Church	Com.
Non-Manual	3	-	4	4	3	2	6	7
Manual/Unskilled	2	1	-	-	7	5	3	1
Students	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	1
Unemployed	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-
Not Stated or Unanswered	2	3	-	1	2	2	1	-
TOTAL	**8**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**12**	**9**	**10**	**9**

As indicated by the left hand part of Table 4:

- Just over half of the 19-25 age group stated that they were in some kind of employment.
- More church participants, in this age group, were employed and in higher paying occupations.
- A higher proportion of church males were employed compared with the community males. For the females there was no significant difference in the level of employment.

- There were only three unemployed persons from this age group who were all from the community.

The right hand part of Table 4 indicates that:

- Most participants (thirty-four) in the age group 26-40 were employed.
- None stated that they were unemployed. However, five did not state whether or not they were working.
- For both men and women in this age group, there were minor differences in the levels of employment between the church and community groups.

SHELTER ARRANGEMENTS

This is the classification of participants according to their housing/living arrangements. All the participants in the 13-18 age group said they were the only family occupying their homes but the ownership status was not specified. The shelter arrangements for the other age groups are displayed below in Table 5.

TABLE 5 SHELTER ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGE GROUPS 19-25 AND 26-40

(n=66)

	AGE GROUP 19-25				**AGE GROUP 26-40**			
Owned By	**Males**		**Females**		**Males**		**Females**	
	Church	Com.	Church	Com.	Church	Com.	Church	Com.
Participants	-	-	-	1	2	5	1	1
Parents	5	-	4	-	-	1	1	-
Relatives	2	-	1	2	-	1	-	-
Others	-	4	-	-	3	-	3	4
Rented	1	1	1	4	5	2	5	3
Not Stated	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1
TOTAL	**8**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**12**	**9**	**10**	**9**

Table 5 shows that:

- Young adult, church participants were more likely to be living in houses owned by parents and relatives than community participants of the same age.
- Only one young adult owned the home she lived in.
- For both age groups, almost equal numbers of community participants lived in rented accommodation as those living with others.
- The proportion of church participants living away from relatives increased with age. Almost half of the older participants were living in rented accommodation and away from their family of origin.
- More older community participants owned their own homes compared with the church participants.

COMPARISON OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

All the participants in the **13-18 age group** lived in the community, showed similar education status and reported similar shelter arrangements. There therefore seemed to be very little difference in socio-economic status between church and community participants in this age group.

For the older groups, employment and shelter arrangements were the main indices used to determine socio-economic status. **Among the 19-25 age group**, the data on employment suggested that more church males were employed, in better paying jobs and therefore seemed marginally better off. Both church and community females seemed to be of similar employment status.

A few church participants were pursuing higher education compared with none from the community. It is possible that those who were studying were able to do so because of support from family, which could suggest a higher socio-economic status.

In relation to shelter arrangements, arguably participants living on family premises might enjoy a slightly higher economic status with less expenditure associated with housing and therefore more disposable income. Rental accommodation might also suggest a regular income and therefore a higher status compared with those living with 'others.'

In the balance, church males in the 19-25 age group seemed slightly better off than community males. However, both sets of women seemed to be of similar socio-economic status.

For the 26-40 age group, more church males were in employment than community males, but more community males owned their own homes compared with church males, most of whom rented theirs. Church and community females had similar employment and home ownership status. On the basis of these indices therefore, it is difficult to determine the relative socio-economic status for the older participants. Except for four females and one church male, most participants in this age group lived in the community suggesting equal socio-economic status.

PARTICIPANTS' UNION STATUS

This refers to the types of relationship participants in the age range 19-40 were in at the time of the research. Participants were classified into four groups. This information is displayed in Table 6.

1. Single: No union
2. Visiting: A non-residential union that is, the partners did not live in the same residence
3. Common-law: Partners lived together in a non-legal union
4. Married: Partners lived together in a legally recognised union

TABLE 6 UNION STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGE GROUPS 19-25 AND 26-40

(n=66)

UNION STATUS	AGE GROUP 19-25					AGE GROUP 26-40				
	Males		Females			Males		Females		
	Ch	Co.	Ch	Co	**Combined**	Ch	Co	Ch	Co	**Combined**
Single	5	4	3	2	14	5	3	3	3	14
Visiting	2	1	3	5	11	-	3	1	3	7
Common-law	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3	5
Married	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	6	-	14
TOTAL	**8**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**26**	**12**	**9**	**10**	**9**	**40**

In the 19-25 age group:

- Just over a half of the respondents were single and over two-fifths were in visiting relationships. For each of these categories, there were similar numbers of church and community participants.
- None of the participants had been married and only one was in a common-law union.

In the 26-40 age group:

- Church participants were for the most part either married or single. Fourteen persons in the age range were married, of which thirteen were church participants.
- Community participants were more or less evenly distributed between single, visiting and common-law unions.
- All five participants in common-law unions were from the community group.

EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY

Participants were asked to describe their experiences of their family. The significant findings are summarised below under three headings:

1. Common trends
2. Differences
3. Other significant observations

COMMON TRENDS

There were at least six commonalities across all the groups:

1. Family was most often extended.
    - The classical nuclear family was not common in the participants' experiences.
    - Many families lived in a household with other relatives and friends and living in a 'big yard' often facilitated this.
    - Most of the younger adults in the 19-25 age group were still living with their families of origin and even single mothers in the older adult groups often continued to live with a parent, usually mother, or in households with siblings and their children.
    - Many also experienced family as being more than blood relations. Friendship networks were considered family when they were sources of affection, care and a sense of belonging.[9] Some participants were living with friends who they had 'adopted' as their family and at least one young adult had lived with a 'foster' mother since her parents separated when she was ten.

---

[9] See excerpt 5, church females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p.368; Excerpt 2, church males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 375.

2. Involvement in more than one childbearing union was common.

    - Stepparents and half siblings were quite common indicating the tendency for more than one childbearing union. For example, most teens had half siblings and approximately one-fifth of them lived with a stepparent. Most commonly, participants referred to siblings either as being on their 'mother's side' or on their 'father's side' depending on who the shared parent was.

3. There was a relationship between marriage and:
   a) residency with both biological parents
   b) father presence
   c) the number of childbearing unions.
    - Children seemed more likely to live with both biological parents if they were married. For example eight of the church teens lived with both biological parents. Seven of these parents were married. Only one community teen lived with both parents and they were married.
    - Children seemed more likely to live with their biological father if their parents were married. Ten church teens lived with their fathers; seven of whom were married. The parents of the only community teen living with her biological father were married.
    - Teen participants with married parents tended to live with full siblings only. It is possible that married couples tended to have one set of offspring but there is also evidence from other research to suggest that there is a tendency for children of previous unions of the father to be excluded from marital unions. Commenting on a study on the role of men in the family, conducted in Jamaica in 1993, Barry Chevannes notes:

> *The most disturbing finding...was the neglect of outside children, that is, children outside the present union. Where fathers have only outside children, their frequency of contact will be higher than in cases where they also have inside children. Thus, the*

neglect of the outside child is associated with the presence of inside children.[10]

4. It was the norm for mothers to be resident with their children.
    - Most children lived or had lived at some time with their mother.
    - Most of the participants who were mothers had their children living with them.
    - Most reported cases of stepparents were stepfathers. This suggested that children were more likely to stay with their mother than with their father when a union breaks down.

5. Father absence or non-residency was common.
    - Except for married families, absence of a biological father was common. For example, most teens (fifteen of twenty-seven) did not live with a biological father. Similarly, six of the thirteen fathers in the older adult group did not live with their children.

6. Childbearing was highly valued.
    - Of the oldest participants, seven of the eleven church males had children. Similarly most (six of nine) of the community males had at least one child and at least two had more than one 'baby-mother'. In the case of the female church participants, five (out of ten) had children. All but one of the community females had children and at least three of them had children by more than one partner, one by as many as four.
    - Older church females spoke of feeling pressured by friends to have children if they had none or to have more if they only had one.
    - Both church and community males placed great significance on fathering and many expressed the desire to do better than their fathers.

---

[10] B. Chevannes, "Stresses and Strains: Situational Analysis of the Caribbean Family," (Unpublished Paper for ECLAC, 1994), p. 15.

- Two young adult community males spoke with pride about their fathers having many children (one as many as sixteen) and saw this as a pattern worth emulating.[11]
- There were indications that parent-child bonds were sometimes stronger than bonds between parents.[12]

DIFFERENCES

There were some discernible differences between church and community participants in their experiences of family. There were at least five categories of differences worthy of note:

1. Childbearing patterns
   - More church participants tended to postpone childbearing until after marriage as compared with community participants for whom childbearing tended to commence with a visiting union. For example, among the older adults although only one community participant was married, most (fourteen of eighteen) had at least one child. In contrast, of the twenty-one church participants, twelve had children. Seven of the church participants in the older adult groups were married.
   - In addition, the community women did not feel that childbearing required a permanent relationship with the father.[13] Similarly, community men felt that a woman should bear a child for them before they got married to her.[14]

2. Prevalence of step-parenting
   - More community participants experienced stepfamilies than church participants. For example, four community children lived with stepparents

---

[11] See excerpt 3, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 370.
[12] See excerpt 2, community females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, pp. 362-363.
[13] Ibid.
[14] See excerpt 3, community males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 383.

compared with one church child. Similarly, three community young adults lived with stepparents compared with one church young adult.

3. Frequent union types and response to marriage
    - More parents of church teen participants were married compared with those parents of the community teens. (Seven versus one). Parents of the community teens tended to be single or in common-law unions.
    - Only participants in the oldest age group were married and most of these (thirteen of twenty two) were church participants. Only one community male was married. (See Table 6).
    - Male participants from the community spoke of multiple relations as the norm.[15] Church males by comparison tended to be in monogamous unions even when they were not married.
    - There were also contrasting reactions to marriage among the adult participants. Generally, community adults seemed less comfortable with marriage than church adults. Church participants seemed open to marriage as long as they were financially secure. Community adult males felt marriage was for later on in life and the younger ones felt it was not possible to be faithful to one woman at their age.[16]

4. Father presence and understanding of role
    - More church teens lived with their biological fathers than did community teens.
    - Church males who were fathers were more likely to live with their children than community fathers possibly because they were more likely to be married. Non-married church fathers were as absent as community fathers.
    - Fathering for most males involved providing financially, disciplining and counselling their children. For some community participant this did not require a father to live with his children.[17] Church males seemed to make a stronger connection between fathering roles and husband/partner roles.

---

[15] See excerpt 2, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 369-370.

[16] See excerpt 5, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 371.

[17] See excerpt 4, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 371.

5. Experiences of family trauma
    - More teens tended to be discontent with their experiences of family than the adult participants.
    - Generally speaking, church girls seemed to have more positive family experiences than community girls while community boys seemed more positive about their experiences than their counterparts.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

There were four other significant observations from the data on participants' family experiences that will be highlighted.

1. Church participants in common-law and premarital childbearing situations
    - It was significant to note that the only teen and the only young adult with children (one each) were from church groups. The young adult was also the only one in that age group in a common-law union. Two other young adult church participants had partners who were pregnant at the time of the research.
    - The usual caution associated with someone from the church living in a common-law relationship or getting someone pregnant out of wedlock seemed to be absent from the three young adult church males who were in those situations. Their relative calm and ease in talking about their situations contrasted with the only church teen girl who had a child. She seemed distracted and uncomfortable in the group when there were discussions about premarital pregnancy. After the group discussion, she shared with me that she felt unwelcome at her local congregation and that this had led her to be searching for another congregation.

      The fact that all three males attend the same church suggests that this church could be more liberal than other churches. In addition, even though they attended regularly they were not yet members of the church and that may also be a factor explaining their relative ease with premarital fathering.

There may also be a hint of sexist bias in how the issue is often dealt with by some churches. It seems to put more pressure on female church members who are in these situations.

2. Changes in union status follow many directions
   - Change of union status happened in various directions and not necessarily from visiting to common-law and then to legal marriage. For example, many church participants moved from visiting to legal married unions, and few lived together before getting married. Also at least three community female participants had moved from common-law to a visiting union or no union at all and were not particularly keen on marriage. These observations challenge some of the commonly held theories about the stages in the union formation serial order.[18]

3. Sources of positive family experiences
   - Teens associated positive family experiences with feelings of being loved, heard and helped with their problems. Having time with their parents was also important to them.[19]
   - A good relationship with a mother was often a source of positive experience for participants. One church teen for example was full of praise for her single mother.
   - For others, family was experienced as positive when they could see their parents as positive role models.
   - Adult participants spoke of children as a source of happiness for them.
   - The support and acceptance of a 'foster family', which few participants had experienced, were also seen as positive.
   - For some of the church participants, teamwork with their spouse, in things like the domestic responsibilities, was also considered a positive experience.
   - Good relations with half siblings were also seen as positive.[20]

---

[18] See Chapter 1, p. 20.

[19] See excerpt 2, church males 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 360.

[20] See excerpt 2, church females 19-25 Appendix IV-B, p. 364.

4. Sources of negative family experiences
   - Participants' negative family experiences were often associated with feelings that they were unplanned for. Some female community teens spoke of themselves as 'mistakes,' referring to the unplanned nature of their birth.[21] Three of the young adult community female participants also spoke of being mistakes. However they felt they were overcoming most of the hurt connected with being born into such a situation.
   - Conflicts between parents or siblings, poor parent-child relations and poor communication between family members were other sources of negative family experiences. At least two felt they did not belong to a family because of the conflicts they had with their mother. Two of the church males living with both parents spoke of conflicts between their parents. In one case, he felt his parents, who had been in a common-law union for eighteen years had stayed together only because he was doing well in high school and they wanted him to go on to university. He felt it was their commitment to him that kept them together.[22] Some parents in the older age group spoke of challenges with older teenage children.
   - Family was also experienced as negative where there were difficulties associated with living in a stepfamily. Many of those who lived with a stepparent had unpleasant experiences associated with conflict or preferential treatment of other siblings by the stepparent.
   - Some of the young adult church females spoke of difficult emotions related to not being told about some of their half siblings when they were children. Most were interested in knowing siblings they had never met. The nature of the relationship with half siblings who lived in a different household seemed to be influenced by factors such as whether there was any perceived rivalry for parental attention and financial resources or threat to the stability of their parents union. Where these were present relations tended to be strained.[23]
   - Negative family experiences were also associated with participants' experience (or lack of experience) of a father. Some spoke of the experiences of paternal neglect. For example, three church boys who had

---

[21] See excerpt 3, community females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 347.

[22] See excerpt 1, church males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 373.

[23] See excerpt 4, church females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 366.

never lived with their fathers spoke of painful aspects of their relationship with them. Some of them spoke about the type of father they were hoping to be.[24] These participants had particular images or expectations of what a father should be and felt they did not want to perpetuate the type of fathering which some of them had experienced. Similarly some of the older men spoke of harsh experiences with their fathers which still stood out in their minds even though they were adults.[25] Additionally, two of the older adult church males spoke, with some regret, of meeting their fathers at ages seventeen and twenty-six respectively.

- For some of the community women it was an unsupportive father of their children as well as conflict with a partner which were sources of negative family experiences.
- Many of the community girls also spoke of suicidal feelings associated with unpleasant experiences of their families as well as feelings of anger and even hatred to one or other of their parents.[26] How much of this suicidal tendency is directly related to their experiences of family or merely a reflection of emotional turmoil, real or imagined, which many children in their adolescence years experience, is uncertain. Recent studies suggest that approximately one in every two Jamaican teenagers exhibit suicidal behaviour and as many as fourteen per cent of students have attempted suicide at least once.[27] As the discussion with teen participants suggests, some of this susceptibility to suicidal ideation may be related to family experiences.
- Being ill-treated by extended family members such as uncles and aunts was another source of negative family experiences.[28]

---

[24] See excerpt 2, church males 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 360.

[25] See excerpt 2, community males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p.383; Excerpt 1, church males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 385.

[26] See excerpt 2, community females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 346.

[27] Jamaica Youth for Christ Survey referred to in an article appearing in *The Daily Gleaner* April 28, 2001, p.1. One of the thirteen main causes of suicidal behaviour among teens was conflict at home.

[28] See excerpt 1, church males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 385.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

What this section has highlighted is that both church and community participants had very similar socio-economic backgrounds. What is more, there were a number of similarities in their family experiences. However, there were some significant differences in particular with regard to union status, interest in marriage and timing of childbearing. This could suggest that church involvement and religious values might have as much an effect on one's experiences of family as do socio-economic factors. Having met the participants, the next section will present what they said about families and the churches in Cross Town.

SECTION 3.3 WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID: FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

PERCEPTION OF A FAMILY

Participants were asked to draw and explain a picture of what they considered a family to be or to give a definition of what they thought a family was. Some descriptions were structural and concerned mainly with what the composition of the family should be like. Generally though, the descriptions were related more to function, that is, what they felt a family should do or what should happen in a family.

Among both church and community teens (13-18), family was defined very similarly.

Structurally, there was a tendency in all the teen groups to define family in very idealistic terms and in most cases as a typical nuclear family made up of mother, father and children (One church boy interestingly added 'pet' to the list). Some seemed to be offering a textbook definition which they had learned in school as the following excerpts illustrate:

Voice 49: *This is a nuclear family. And a family is a group of persons living together in the same house usually related by blood.*

Voice 44: *A family is a group of people usually living together and related by marriage, blood relationship and adoption.*

DH: *What class you learn that in?*

Voice 44: *Home Economics.*

(Excerpt 1, community females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, pp. 345-346).

There was however clear acknowledgment of the differences between their definitions and what they saw in the community and in their own family.

Another structural consideration was the notion of a common bond or 'ties' as some participants preferred to call it. A few made an overt mention of being related by blood, but at least one community boy was at pains to point out that family members did not have to be related by blood. Some emphasised, in their drawing, the gender bonds between father and son or mother and daughter as important elements of a family.[29]

Common residency was also considered by most teens to be part of how family was defined as this excerpt illustrates.

> *Voice 19:* *My drawing is showing mother, father and children and all living together under one roof and sharing household chores.*
>
> (Excerpt 1, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 350).

Functionally, relational and nurturing functions seemed to be most important to the teens. These included love, guidance, support, care and protection. Community teens tended to be more concerned with function and less with description about who constituted a family than were church teens.

Most young adult church participants, like those in the teens group, defined family in structural terms as a nuclear family. Additionally, some church participants saw family as an institution 'ordained' by God. One female described a hierarchical authority structure in a family, flowing from God to the father, from father to the mother and from parents to the children. Both church groups also spoke of unity, common goals and common residency as characteristics of family but a few thought the latter was not a necessary condition.

---

[29] See excerpt 1, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 349.

In comparison, community young adults tended to describe a family as, 'a group of people', rather than specifying its composition. Some also saw blood relations as a defining feature of family but spoke of commonalities other than blood, such as a common purpose or residency.

In functional terms, family for the church young adults generally fulfilled relational, nurture and socialisation functions. These participants saw family playing an important role in determining the outcome of the person and the choices one made in life, as this excerpt illustrates.

> *Voice 1:* *I think it plays a good role in your life, it has a great impact on your life. Because how you grow up, it will tell the type of person you are going to turn out to be.*
>
> (Excerpt 1, church females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 364).

In comparison, community males in the same age group tended to limit their definitions to functional terms such as 'loving and caring for each other.' For them, family provided a sense of belonging. Both groups of community participants spoke of the socialisation function of family and its influence on life outcomes.

For the older adults, their definitions of a family seemed closer to their lived experiences and they were more aware of the complexities of real life family dynamics.

Structurally, for the older female church participants, family was described as 'a group of people' or 'persons who come together.' This referred not just to a union between a man and a woman but to some kind of bonding between persons in a family and their working together for the benefit of each other. Some older church females also felt that a stable structure and leadership were important to a family, as 'someone should be in charge.' Some of the older church males described the nuclear family as the core of the family network. For them too, a union based on love should precede childbearing in the stages of family formation. Though marriage was not explicitly mentioned, they spoke of the union as a man and a woman 'coming

together' or referred to the partners as husband and wife suggesting that marriage might have been in their thinking.

Many of the older church adults tended to see family as more than a nuclear unit. Church males, for example, saw family as including wider relations such as nephews and aunts as well as others who might not be related by blood or might not be living in the same household. One notable example cited was family members living abroad. It was the ongoing participation of those overseas members that determined whether they were a part of the family rather than common residency.

> *Voice 1:* *Not quite sure if they have to live together because sometimes you have family who are abroad... and they still have an input, a strong input whether monetary or in terms of advice but it is still a family.*
>
> (Excerpt 1, church females 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 379).

The older church females extended their understanding of a family even further, for them it was more about the closeness of association than about blood. Consequently, a sense of belonging and the notion of mutual support in times of trouble were important.

Functionally, older church adults spoke of the relational functions of the family. For the males, the family was to create linkages between loved ones as well as a sense of belonging. It was also for fulfilling a human need for relationships. Nurture and socialisation functions were very important for church participants in this age group. Family was for the purpose of bringing up children in the way that 'God wanted.' It should also be a training ground for persons to develop and fulfil their potential. Again older church females, like church participants in other groups, thought family was God-ordained for the perpetuation of the human race.

Turning to the older adult community participants they also had structural and functional components to their definition of family. Like the church males, some of the older community females did see the nuclear configuration as the core of family. But for other community males in this group, family composition was no more

specific than 'a group of people.' Again family was not limited to persons related by blood but included persons who were related in other significant ways. Some older female community participants went as far as to say that a family was an entire community and that it took a community to raise a child.

Reflecting the pragmatism that characterised this age group, some pointed out the fact that family was not perfect. 'Respectful' leadership was seen as necessary to negotiate the fluctuating experiences of family life.

> *Voice 64:* *...Because at no time at all in this world, that everything will run smooth. You will have ups and downs but you have to have a head in the family who is respectful. So in the family, you have to have an elder to get things going in the unit.*
>
> (Excerpt 1, community males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 382).

This could be understood to mean that there should be a family head who commanded the respect of the rest of the family. There was reference in both community groups to men as head of the family on the basis of their perceived role as provider and leader. However some women disputed this, referring to the common absence of fathers, situations where men were present but had no active role in the family or where they failed to provide financially. They favoured leadership on the basis of effective role function rather than on the basis of role expectation.

For the functional aspects, older community participants echoed the relational, nurture and socialisation roles of the family mentioned by the other groups.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF A FAMILY

Common Trends

There were many similarities in the perspectives of community and church participants right across the age spectrum.

1. Family had structural and functional elements but there was a greater emphasis on the functional aspects of a family.

2. Family was more than the typical nuclear family. Although most groups suggested some kind of nuclear configuration at the core, there was general agreement that family was more than that core. Indeed family was more than blood, because close association and significance of relationships were equally important determinants of family make-up.

3. Family played a role in determining a person's outcome in life. For most participants particularly in the older age groups, there was a consistent connection made between family experiences and life outcomes.

4. The nurture and relational functions of family life were common across the groups. This they expressed in the functions of the family such as the provision of love, security, guidance, support and a sense of belonging.

5. The idea of headship or leadership seemed to be a common feature of how people saw family across the groups. How this was perceived did show some variation from the hierarchical top-down structure originating in God to male headship based on the predetermined role expectations of a financial provider to leadership based on effective role function rather than expectation.

6. Having 'something in common' was also similar across many of the groups but this had different manifestations.

Differences

Among the participants in the 13-18 age group, their views were practically indistinguishable. However, as the participants increased in age, more distinctions became discernible between the church and community participants.

1. For the church groups, there was a greater emphasis on family as having a divine origin or centre. The family was a God-ordained institution and should in some way be guided by divine principles.

2. Although generally family function was emphasised by all the groups, church participants gave more attention to structural elements of family such as family composition while community participants focused more on functional aspects.

3. The ordering of family formation was another significant difference. For the church participants, a legal union between a man and a woman should precede childbearing in the stages of family formation. For the community participants however, no explicit order for family formation was proposed.

Other Significant Observations

1. There was some ambivalence among the teen church girls, about accepting families based on non-married unions as bona fide families. When the participants spoke in theoretical terms about family, many seemed open to family forms other than married nuclear ones. However, once the discussion became focussed on church membership, a few questioned whether people in non-married unions should be considered as families. This is reflected in the quote below.

> *Voice 19:* *But with the man and the lady living together and having children, that is not really a real family because normally a family is described as coming together by marriage, by law or by birth or by adoption. But the man and the woman are not connected in any way so I don't see that as a family.*
>
> (Excerpt 5, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 358).

Some saw the common-law union especially with children involved as a family for the children, but not for the couple who they felt were not really 'connected in any way,' they are just 'baby-mother' and 'baby-father.'

2. Teen participants appeared to operate with a duality in their understanding of family. There was what may be described as the ideal family on the one hand and the real on the other. The former was a formal definition they had been taught or a fantasy that was alive in their imagination. The latter was the actual experiences of family they had and observed. It was significant that some in this age group who described the most painful experiences of family, still defined family in idealistic terms. Often a child would include in their description of their ideal family the very things that were lacking in their real experiences. A church male teen for example, who had no experience of living with a father, described his drawing of a family as follows:

> *Voice 68:* *I have a house with a scenery of mummy, daddy and the children. I also have a next scenery of the father and the son talking. In the first scene, the father is there to share joy and happiness with mummy and the children and to fill that gap. And when the father is not there, they feel lonely. Not that mummy does not show them love, but when a father is there, it brings in an extra love.*
>
> (Excerpt 1, church males 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 360).

He later went on to describe his disappointment of growing up without a father.

3. There was also a focus in the teen group with nurture functions of a family probably reflecting the dominant experiences of children as receivers of care.

4. There was evidence of progression in perspectives as participants got older.
   - Generally speaking, their perspectives on family came closer to their lived realities. For example, in the younger groups the presence of mother, father and children was assumed, but in both of the oldest female groups,

there was the suggestion that families did not always have these persons present.

- There seemed to be a development on the functions of families. So from the preoccupation with nurturing functions like love and sharing in the younger groups, the role of family in determining life outcomes became more pronounced as the participants got older.

- In addition, there was an increasing recognition that household and family were not necessarily seen as the same. There were fewer references to common residency in the older groups and some participants made this more explicit in their reference to a family that might be separated by migration.

5. It was noticeable too that for community males, fathering did not require common residency with a partner or with the children.[30]

[30] See excerpt 4, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 371.

PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY

PREVALENT FAMILY FORMS AND WHY

There was no significant difference in perspectives between the groups about the family forms commonly found in the community. Most participants felt that single parent families were the most prevalent and that in most cases, the single parent was a mother, many of whom lived with an extended family and may be in a visiting relationship. A look at the data of the forty community participants revealed that twelve were single parents or lived with a single parent.[31] Eight of these lived in an extended family household. These family dynamics sometimes made it difficult to distinguish a single parent family from an extended family and made classification very challenging. What was used to describe the parent as single was the fact that they had primary responsibility for the care of their children. Extended families usually headed by a grandmother and common-law families were also considered common although participants were divided on which was most prevalent. Legal marriage unions and nuclear families were rare. Various explanations were offered for the prevalence of these family forms as well as the prevalent unions occurring in the community. The reasons for the common family forms will be discussed.

One suggestion was that the commonness of 'big yards' in the community made it easier for extended family networks to survive and often favoured single mothers who found support from the extended family in the yard.

Other suggestions were related to the attitudes of men and women. Men were seen as not being able to be satisfied with one woman. Community men, for example, felt that many men like to 'run around' because they are looking for different qualities that they cannot find in one woman. One participant described some men as 'sperm donators'[32] because they were only interested in getting a woman pregnant then moving on. Some participants suggested that even women who wanted a residential union were deterred by the fear of being betrayed by men who were too interested in

---

[31] See Table 2, p. 117.

[32] See excerpt 3, church females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 365.

multiple relations or by feeling that the men lacked the commitment for longer-term relationships.

Some women, on the other hand, were thought to be lacking in self-esteem and self-respect. Others were too financially dependent on the men and saw their financial salvation tied up in having a child for a man who she feels can maintain her. This could cause some women to give into a man's demand for a child. This economic dependency was considered to be behind the common occurrence of women having different children for different men. Additionally, there were some women who just wanted a child and were not interested in a relationship with the father of the child. Others, it was said, deliberately chose single parenting because they considered sharing residence with a man as undesirable even if they wanted a relationship with him. Still others were seen as being too greedy or trivial and merely had children for financial gain or simply because they wanted their child to have the physical features of the father.

Another common explanation for the high number of single parent families was the cultural value of childbearing. There was the feeling that having a child brings status and social acceptance. It was also argued that some men equated manhood with having many children by many women, the result being that these women were left with the primary responsibility of caring for a child.

Yet another explanation for the prevalent family forms was what some participants saw as many persons simply living out the patterns that they had experienced or saw around them.

Others saw economic pressure as another reason behind the frequency of single parent families. It was this that led many fathers to leave their families in search of employment opportunities elsewhere including overseas or led some to withdraw from or to be rejected by their partner if they were unable to contribute financially. This was substantiated in an interview with Chevannes in which he suggested that:

> *....once there is high unemployment you are bound to have a high incidence of family types that can't be rooted because no man is going to feel with any self-respect if he can't have money to give a woman for his child/children. It's not self-respecting and so men shy away from their paternal responsibilities and in fact, not shy away, she does not want to see you.*[33]

Another set of contributing factors to the frequency of single parenting, it was suggested, had to do with patterns of relationships such as early sexual involvement and short-lived relationships. This, among other things, was thought to lead to the apparently high incidence of unplanned pregnancies.

Aspects of inner-city community dynamics were seen as playing a part in the family forms that were common. Crime and violence in the community, which resulted in the violent death or incarceration of some fathers and migration of others, were seen as some of the community dynamics contributing to the prevalence of single mothers and absent fathers. There were also men in the community often referred to as 'dons', who wielded considerable power often sustained by financial power acquired from criminal activity. [34] Some participants spoke of a growing trend for 'dons' to choose anyone they wanted as a partner and often this involved young teenage girls in the community.

Voice 43: *I have known cases where you have one "don" for the area and he will have five women in the area and all five women have children for him. And the five of them will have to live good.*

(Excerpt 1, community females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 362).

Participants also sought to explain why people living in the community were much more likely to be in a common-law relationship than legally married. One explanation was that people did not want to be 'tied down' and wanted the freedom to leave if there were any disagreements. Another was the perception that marriage often had a negative effect on the quality of the relationship. Community participants

---

[33] See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with B. Chevannes, Appendix VIII-C, p. 414.

[34] See p. 8.

in the study often expressed this view as one of the reasons they were reluctant to get married.

Legal marriage was also an unattractive prospect because of the association with class and status. Some community males in the 19-25 age group, for example, said marriage was more compatible with the upper and middle classes. Similarly, church females thought that people in the community did not perceive themselves as having the material prerequisites such as a house. As mentioned previously men in the community groups saw marriage as something for later on in life, when they wanted to 'settle down.' (See p. 128).

Equally significant was the fact that marriage was seen as incompatible with the norm of multiple relations. Community females in the 19-25 group felt that women in their age group were interested in marriage 'till death do us part,' but were reluctant because of the fears of infidelity by the men or of becoming discontented in their relationship after a few years. It seemed apparent therefore that people made a distinction between a common-law union and a legal marriage union.

OPINIONS ABOUT THE DIFFERENT FAMILY FORMS

The groups shared a range of opinions about the different family forms found in Cross Town but in general there were no significant differences between the groups. Generally, they pointed to the possibility of both positive and negative experiences of family in any form. There was a general consensus that all forms should be accepted as families, although there were signs of ambivalence especially among the church girls. For the most part however, what was emphasised and what mattered was not the family form but how people related to each other. For example, some of the things that were considered to be important for the adult church females were love and security, which they felt children can have even without a father being present. It is possible to group the comments according to opinions about: two-parent families, single parent families and extended families.

A two-parent family was considered by most participants to be the best situation. Some felt that children needed both parents to give them a more rounded perspective of life. With both parents around discipline was more likely to be enforced. One

group thought it avoided the inequalities, animosity and confusion, which they sometimes saw when children were shared between different partners particularly those in visiting unions. Not much comparisons were made however between common-law and married families which were the typical examples of two-parent families.

Although there was a clear distinction in the minds of the participants between a common-law union and a legal marriage union there seemed to be some ambiguity surrounding any distinction between families based on these different union types. Participants often compared single parent or extended with married, nuclear or two-parent families with very little specific reference to common-law families. The reasons for this ambiguity were not explicit but could suggest that married and common-law families are viewed as two stages on the same continuum rather than completely distinct family forms. Whatever applied to one applied to the other. The older community males alluded to this when they expressed the view that the role of both parents was valuable but partners should live with each other first before getting married.

Explicit views about married families came largely from the church participants. Church males felt that children in families based on marriage have the advantage of being supported by both parents. Moreover, they thought people in a marriage union tended to have more things in common that made relating to each other easier. Some community females in the age range 19-25 also felt that children from such situations tended to be more sociable.

However, while there was considerable support for a two-parent family there were some reservations. For instance, the group of 19-25 community females felt that such a family could only have these advantages where conflict was managed and relationships were good. Similarly, the older males from the community thought that it was better to live with one parent than to have an abusive second parent.

Single parent families received most comments which could suggest that it is a commonly debated issue with which people are familiar. This family form, for most groups, invariably meant more pressure on a mother to provide financially for the family and to take care of the children. As a result, some thought that single parents

might be prone to frustration and might take out their frustration on their children. Also if a single parent has to be away often, for example at work, children could be left unsupervised.

Older church males pointed out that many single mothers are young, inexperienced and immature and can be neglectful at times. Additionally, single mothers, it was felt, sometimes did not exert a strong enough control over their children and the absence of a father could leave a gap in the child's discipline. Older community males mentioned that another kind of gap is created when the child did not know the non-resident parent or was induced to hate that parent by only hearing bad things about him or her. They also expressed that not experiencing the support from both parents placed the child at a disadvantage. In support of this, one female teen participant whose lone parent was her father, shared her need to discuss some issues with a mother because she was not comfortable discussing them with her father.[35] Some also pointed to the possibility that living with one parent might have psychosocial effects on the child. Some participants, for example, thought that the absence of a father might create a greater need for boys to look outside the home for role models and for girls to seek male affection in intimate relationships.

Some groups, like the older church males, considered visiting relationships to be an inadequate basis on which to build healthy families because the commitment in these relationships tended to be low. For them, such relationships were unfair as more of the childcare responsibilities were on the mothers. Some also spoke of the inconsistency in upbringing that can happen when parents are in a visiting relationship and their child is exposed to conflicting values from different parental households.

> *Voice 15:* *Sometimes when the child knows the parents, but the parents live at different places, it can be that when the child is with the mother, she can instil certain values and goals in the child. But when the child goes with the father, there can be something different. So the child is not going to grow up the way that he or she should.*
>
> (Excerpt 3, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 351).

---

[35] See excerpt 2, church females 13-18 Appendix IV-A, p. 350.

Extended families were seen as having one potential disadvantage where a child might be under the influence of different relatives; each with different values and notions of child-rearing. In situations where the parents and grandparents were in the same household, there were conflicts sometimes between them over how the child should be brought up. Despite this, most participants who had that experience of being brought up by grandparents thought it was positive. However, other participants felt that grandparents often were unable to manage their grandchildren and ended up spoiling them. Some acknowledged that many single mothers got support from their extended family, which was one other benefit of this family form.

FAMILY NEEDS AND CONCERNS

Participants were asked to brainstorm what they considered to be the main needs and concerns of families in the community and then they voted to decide the top three in order of priority. It was possible to identify six primary issues that generate needs and concerns for community families. In addition, there were a few subsidiary issues worth highlighting because they were stated in different ways by many of the groups.

Primary Issues

The data suggests that participants saw financial need as the main concern of families. Every group identified it as a concern; six of the twelve groups rated it as number one while at least four others rated it in the top three. This was often linked to unemployment. What was evident throughout the discussion about community families in all groups was the connection between economic considerations and patterns of union and family formation. For example, some of the patterns of union formations that were discussed in many of the groups were considered to be opportunistic and related to attempts to secure scarce financial benefits from would-be benefactors. Sibling rivalry among children of different unions was sometimes portrayed as being linked to unequal distribution of limited financial resources. Also father presence was often directly connected with a father's potential to provide financially. Where financial provision was not possible it was more likely that a father could be less involved or not involved at all in the care of his children, sometimes at the request of the mother. A related concern raised by some groups was the issue of housing. Limited financial resources meant that some people were unable

to afford housing outside the extended family household. The result was small, overcrowded accommodation for many families. This was the experience of Doris and Tom one of the case families presented in section 3.4 of this chapter.

The poor quality of relationships between family members was another area of primary concern. This was often expressed as, 'a lack of love,' 'no respect' or 'poor communication' and manifested itself in interpersonal conflicts, physical or verbal abuse and the absence of physical affection. Again all the groups in some way referred to this concern with at least four groups identifying 'lack of love' as the main concern.

One way this was expressed by the community teens was the need for greater trust in parent-child and woman-man relations. To illustrate this concern, the community boys talked about a typical scenario of a parent leaving and telling the child that he/she will soon be back, only for the child to hear that the parent had migrated.[36] It was not said whether they knew anyone who that had happened to, but it probably represented a source of real concern for some children of this age group.

Others spoke of conflicts arising from the mistrust partners had for each other because of a tendency for people to have multiple partners. One common result of this mistrust was the unwillingness for some fathers to accept paternity for a child with a partner whom they suspect was involved in other intimate relationships.

Some spoke also of the need for peace and unity. This need was substantiated by the reference to the ill-treatment of children by some parents, the many conflicts between partners as well as violent conflicts between residents in the community. Older church females felt more love should be shown by parents to children and that there was a general need for family members to be more respectful in how they related to each other.

Community females in the 19-25 age group rated unstable family life as their number one concern. Families were constantly being reformed or reconstituted with children often having to move from one household to another. These participants were of the

---

[36] See excerpt 1, community males 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 359.

view that much of this instability resulted from the unpredictability of relationships. Family life, it was felt, needed more committed relationships between partners.

Parenting was another primary issue. All groups mentioned some issues related to parenting often overlapping with the relationship concerns. Ten groups identified 'poor or irresponsible parenting' explicitly, and seven groups rated this in their top three. This manifested itself in what were considered as inadequate reasons for having a child in the first place or in the 'happy-go-lucky' parents who were more concerned about their own enjoyment than about the care and supervision of their children. Some saw this as one of the spin-offs of parents, mothers especially, having children at too young an age and therefore not having the maturity to cope with the responsibilities of parenting.

It is important however not to give the impression that most parents in Cross Town were irresponsible. As one of the community pastors explained:

> *CP 4:* *...I would defend the level of parenting as not always as bad as it is pictured. The parenting or caring is often performed by a relative, who is not the father or mother, but often to a fairly high standard, a lot of genuine care and support and interest...*
>
> (See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 397).

Although it was acknowledged that most parents in the community did their best to support and care for their children, it was viewed that some parents seemed to lack the appropriate skills for the task of parenting.

The prevalence of father absence was seen as one aspect of this concern about parenting. It was felt that more fathers needed to take an active involvement in the life of their children. Also related to parenting was the acknowledgement that the notion of community parenting (whereby it was previously accepted for other adults in a community to provide oversight and discipline for children), was not as common in today's inner-city communities as it used to be. Some of the participants thought this was so because adults no longer corrected children with appropriate care and

respect and parents were therefore reluctant to accept any attempt to correct their children by anyone other than themselves.

Voice 28: *....I don't know how people nowadays look at it and say that they don't want anybody to correct their child, just to leave them alone. I don't believe in that because I cannot raise my child on my own.*

Voice 33: *I don't like that because sometimes they abuse the child. Some just slap a child because they think that can solve things.*

Voice 35: *Exactly. Or they use abusive words.*

(Excerpt 1, community females 26-40, Appendix IV-C, pp. 376-377).

Education was considered by many of the groups as yet another primary concern. One group rated this as their number one concern and at least two other groups rated it in their top three. Yet information on the profile of the community suggests that most residents of the community receive education to secondary level.[37] It is possible therefore that this concern may refer not just to formal education but also to education in life skills such as conflict resolution, decision-making and in employable skills. Some participants felt that people in the community seemed to make ill-advised choices about relationships and childbearing. Participants therefore saw the need for people in the community to be more educated so that they could make more informed and responsible choices. Young people especially needed more guidance for making such choices.

---

[37] See Section 3.1, p. 113.

Subsidiary Concerns

In addition to the primary concerns discussed above, the focus group participants suggested a number of other apparently less prominent issues of concern to families in the community.

Psychosocial consequences of the experiences of family were one set of issues that received fair attention by a number of the groups. For example, some participants spoke of low-self esteem as a likely outcome of a family experience that lacked love and affirmation. Others expressed concerns about the identity issues and other possible effects of not having a father's active presence for the children, especially the boys. The concern for identity seemed also to stem from the difficulty associated with establishing lineage when parents of a child were involved in multiple relations. The teens for example spoke of the embarrassment some children endured when it was obvious that they had been owned by the wrong father.

In addition, what may be described as community welfare issues was another source of subsidiary concern. One such issue was the lack of secure supervision of children. Some participants recognised that irresponsibility on the part of some parents meant that a number of children were not properly supervised. However, even in situations where parents were more responsible, the demands of work, inadequate family support coupled with insufficient care agencies still resulted in children being left unsafe and unsupervised.

Another community welfare issue was the factionalism, violence and criminal activity in the community. It is interesting that these concerns were seen as affecting family well-being, pointing to the inescapable connections between family and community life. As one of the pastors pointed out:

> *CP 4:* *The environment is harsh...so gentleness is not seen as being an appropriate response. Clearly if that element of nurture and care are missing, the next generation will be harsh too.*
>
> (See excerpt 3, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 398).

Not only did these create a concern for the security of residents in the community but it also contributed to the stigmatisation of the community in the eyes of the law enforcement officers and would-be employers. Many spoke of the injustice with which the police treated people in the community when they came on their frequent visits to the community. Others spoke of the unfair treatment meted out to residents by potential employees, who would turn down their job application simply because of where they lived.[38] Moreover, there was concern not just for protection from forces outside the community but also from the abuse of power by internal 'dons.'

These community welfare factors invariably had an impact on the security of family members as well as on their potential for acquiring the financial resources necessary to survive. The primary concerns for more caring and affirming relationships in some families cannot be removed from the realities of the harshness of inner-city life. Similarly, the limiting of employment opportunities caused by the stigmatisation of the community invariably has an impact on the quality of family life

The need for a stronger moral and religious base for more of the families in Cross Town was noted by a few of the groups. This was highlighted by most of the church groups as well as by community participants in the females 26-40 age group, who felt people needed more than just a religious involvement, but that they needed 'to have a sense of who God is.'[39] This was taken to mean some kind of spiritual awareness. There was the feeling that some parents might take their children to church on weekends but left their children unsupervised and open to involvement in wrongdoing while they were out at church activities during the week.

Some participants seemed to be saying that a religious background was of no effect if parents did not spend time with their children, communicate with them about things like handling peer pressure and be willing to correct their children when they were wrong instead of blindly defending them. Moreover, some thought that some families needed to reorder their priorities and they pointed to families that made the purchase of expensive appliances and 'name-brand' clothes more important than paying for education.

---

[38] See p. 115.

[39] See excerpt 2, community females 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 378.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Common Trends

Church and community participants expressed very similar perspectives about community families. There was basic agreement on the following points:

1. It was not the type of family form in itself that led to poor family life; good family life could be experienced in any kind of family form. It was the nature of relationships rather than the family form per se that was taken to determine the well-being of a particular family.

2. The most prevalent family form in the community was considered to be the single parent family, however common-law and extended families were widespread.

3. The arguments advanced to explain the occurrences of common family forms included:
    - Common occurrence of 'big yards'[40]
    - Attitudes and lifestyle choices of both men and women
    - The value of childbearing
    - The tendency to mirror patterns that a person experienced in their family
    - Economic pressure which often manifested itself in opportunistic union formation
    - The patterns of relationships
    - The short-lived or unstable nature of unions
    - Inner-city dynamics such as violence, crime and community 'dons'

4. The view that of all the family forms, single parent families had most disadvantages and that families with both parents had most advantages.

---

[40] See previous discussion on p. 14.

5. The needs and concerns for the families in Cross Town are summarised in Table 7.

TABLE 7 NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF FAMILIES IN CROSS TOWN

Primary Needs and Concerns	Subsidiary Needs and Concerns
▪ Economic and employment issues ▪ Quality of family relationships especially parent-child and between partners ▪ Unstable family life ▪ Parenting issues ▪ Father absence ▪ Education particularly life skills and employment training.	▪ Psychosocial consequences of family ▪ Community and child welfare issues ▪ Moral and religious guidance

Difference

While there were agreements on most of these issues between church and community participants, there was one significant point of difference. Although the contribution of both parents in a family was valued, there was a contrast of opinions about how that could be achieved. This contrast was most evident between the respective male groups.

The church males spoke of the advantages of a legal marriage union as the basis for both parents to be together. Community males however were suspicious of marriage without a period of cohabitation during which partners learn how to work together. The contrast reflects different perspectives on the relationship between union and family formation. For community males, children should come before marriage, for the church males however, marriage should come before children.[41]

[41] See excerpt 3, community males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 383.

This difference could reflect a clash between community values that emphasise trial and childbearing before commitment, and religious values that emphasise commitment before childbearing. What is even less clear is whether the religious value is more motivated by restriction on sexual intercourse before marriage or by considerations of what is best for family life.

Other Significant Observation

There was a noticeable absence of any discussion about incest or sexual abuse within families. This is significant in light of the common concern often expressed in the literature about the prevalence of these. As Leo-Rhynie notes, 'children are also sexually abused. Increasingly, instances of fathers involved in incestuous relationships with their daughters, sons and stepchildren are being reported.'[42] It is possible that these issues remain very taboo and difficult to speak about in a group discussion. Alternatively what may be true of other communities might not be true of Cross Town.

---

[42] E. Leo-Rhynie, *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), p. 35.

GOD'S VISION VERSUS THE CHURCH'S VISION ON FAMILIES

PERCEPTIONS OF GOD'S VISION ON FAMILIES IN CROSS TOWN

When asked about their impressions of God's perspective on the families in Cross Town, participants in all the groups expressed very similar views which were of three main types.

1. God saw families equally
2. God was disappointed with some families and
3. God was forgiving towards them.

All the groups felt that God considered all families with equal regard. One church boy for example spoke of this 'love for all families' as being across social classes.

> *Voice 51:* *I think He sees all of us as one unit. ...He sees us as one whether we have money or not.*
>
> (Excerpt 3, church males 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 361).

In this statement, there seemed to be an implicit association of different family forms with different socio-economic levels. Other church teens saw God's equal regard as applicable to both married and unmarried families. In similar vein, most participants in both the 19-25 male groups felt that God did not see distinctions between single parent families and married families. Some of the community participants in the male young adult group thought that God did not see the differences between families in terms of good and bad but that God loves everybody equally.

Most of the groups also pointed to God's disappointment with some of the families in Cross Town. For example, church girls mentioned that God was disappointed because families in the community had fallen below the standard in the Bible.

> *Voice 17:* *When you read the Bible and how God wanted it, it is below the standard. I think that God is really disappointed.*
>
> (Excerpt 4, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 353).

For them, the standard involved a man and a woman getting married before having children. Community boys echoed some of the sentiments of the church girls. For them, it was sexual relations outside of marriage that they saw as being against God's standard. The community females in the 19-25 age range also were of the view that God disapproved of sexual union before marriage although they did not see it as a standard that they themselves were willing to accept for their lives.

Along the lines of what they considered to be God's standard, young adult church males felt that while God would have commendation for many who had been living by the standards in the Bible, God would consider many others as straying from the prototype of two-parents, which they saw embodied in the creation story of Adam and Eve. In this regard, they felt that God disapproved of fathers running away from their family leaving the mother and children behind.

The source of God's disappointment, as far as community girls were concerned, was unplanned families.

> *Voice 46:* *When He said to be fruitful and multiply, He was saying that if you are going to have a child, then ensure that it is planned for. That means that the child would not be suffering and will not have to do things that are sinful.*
>
> (Excerpt 4, community females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 348).

Some church females in the 19-25 age group mentioned that God would be disheartened with the things that lead to the state of some families such as unwanted pregnancies. Yet in spite of His disappointment, God was seen by all the groups as being willing to forgive. For instance, church boys argued that because the residents of the community are made in God's image, God would not be 'disgusted' with them. Another in the same group offered the qualification that God might be 'disgusted' at people's behaviour but not at the person. Similarly, church girls thought that God had love for all families and in spite of their going the 'wrong way,' He was ready to forgive them. Additionally, church females in the young adult group felt that God would be eager for them to know and experience God's help to have a more fruitful family life.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH'S VISION ON FAMILIES IN CROSS TOWN

Participants also discussed their impressions on what they thought the Church's perspective was for families in Cross Town. They were asked to look at this issue with particular reference to how churches responded to people who were cohabiting and wanted to become members of a church. This issue has been at the centre of much of the debate about the Church's response to family life in the Caribbean.[43]

Part of the reason for this focus was highlighted in an interview with Baptist pastor and Caribbean theologian, Burchell Taylor who reckoned that eighty per cent of the persons who express a desire for church membership at evangelistic services organised by the congregation he pastors, are cohabiting.[44] Dissatisfaction with how the Church had traditionally dealt with the issue had motivated that congregation to engage in a process of reflection on their praxis, which was in progress at the time of the research. The centrality of this issue was behind the focus that is given to it in this study. The perspectives of the church participants themselves were taken as partly reflecting that of the Church. Four significant findings emerged out of these discussions.

Firstly, all the groups felt the Church looked differently on different families. For example, there was agreement between both church girls and boys that churches tended to consider married families in a better light than single parent families. Church and community girls thought that churches saw the latter more as a problem in need of help. They also thought that the families within the churches were seen as better than those outside their walls. In addition, church girls expressed the view too that if a woman was not a Christian and had a child out of wedlock, there was not much of a concern for these churches, but if a church member got pregnant outside of marriage then that was a problem for them. Some churches, it was said, would exclude such a person from membership. In other churches, such a member might be looked down upon and would often leave and choose to go to another church. This was borne out by one of the teen participants, referred to earlier, who had recently

---

[43] See for example V. Panton, *The Church and Common-Law Unions* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1992).

[44] See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with Burchell Taylor, Appendix VIII-A, p. 403.

had a child out of wedlock and was looking around for another church because of the discomfort she felt going to her original church.[45]

Church males in the 19-25 age group spoke of a preference by churches towards married families. It was also felt that churches tended to be condemning in its preaching against people in common-law unions and should be less so. Likewise, community males in the young adult group noted that although anyone could attend any church, they viewed that there was a preference for 'husband and wife families.' Community females highlighted what they saw as a discrimination against common-law unions and persons who practised sex while not married.

The older community males felt that churches saw legal marriage as very important and tended to condemn families that were based on non-marital unions rather than showing love to them. For the community females, it was their observation that churches showed favouritism to the upper classes and were not accepting of people in non-marital unions, which were more common among the lower classes.

Secondly, there was a fairly consistent understanding throughout the groups of the Church's policy towards cohabiting couples. Most churches expected a man and a woman to be married before having children. If a person in a cohabiting relationship wanted to become a member of a church, they thought most churches expected he/she to get married first.

In addition, the young adult church females identified a variety of responses that churches have to persons in these unions who want to become church members. Some, they said, will consider accepting the person into church membership under certain conditions, such as partners not sharing the same bed. Others will administer believer's baptism but withhold church membership until the person is married or becomes separated from the partner. Still others will encourage the couple with counselling support until they have decided on their own what they want to do about their relationship. It was mentioned too that other churches, although they all had marriage in view, demonstrated a range of approaches to deal with considerations such as whether the couple should continue cohabiting before marriage, whether the

---

[45] See - Other Significant Observations - on p. 129.

family should be maintained as a unit if children were involved as well as what level of counselling support and dialogue are offered to the couple and especially to the unbelieving partner.

Most groups reflected a perception of the Church as encouraging such couples towards marriage. However some churches, it was felt, forced people into marriage before membership regardless of the readiness of the partners. In contrast, one community participant in the older adult group related her experience of one of the community churches' effort to journey with her partner and herself, which she found very affirming and indicative of changes in the way some churches were dealing with the common-law issue. That particular church was very understanding of her being in a cohabiting relationship and even though they expected her to be married before becoming a member, they were leaving it up to her to make the decision.

Thirdly, participants showed varied responses to the Church's policy on cohabitation. There were those who agreed, some disagreed and others who partially agreed with the policy. Most female participants in all the church groups as well as those in the older adult community groups were in agreement with the Church's policy. Community males in the young adult and older groups disagreed with it, while the other groups had a more even mix of the three responses. In general, church groups tended towards agreement and community groups towards disagreement.

Those in agreement with the Church's policy felt that if the man was really faithful to the woman and truly loved her, he should get married to her and if he did not, she should leave him. For them an unwillingness to get married showed a lack of commitment. They were of the view that the unbelieving partner might hinder the believing partner's spiritual growth and cause him or her to commit sexual sin. Church girls, for example spoke of a Christian woman continuing to live with an unmarried partner as sin because they would still be having sexual intercourse.[46] Even if they had children together, preserving her 'soul' was considered more important in the long run than keeping the family as a unit.

---

[46] See excerpt 5, church females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 354.

Some church males in the young adult group also expressed that a person should recognise that a decision to become a Christian called for sacrifices that might even affect the family unit. I took this to mean that persons might have to choose to separate from partners and disrupt a family unit in the interest of their faith decision. Some agreeing participants however acknowledged how difficult this could be especially if the non-believing partner was the main breadwinner.

Participants who disagreed with the Church's policy felt churches should be more willing to accept into membership persons in common-law unions before they got married and saw this as one way of winning over the unbelieving partner. As far as they were concerned, a pastor did not have the right to tell someone that they could not join the Church. Moreover, some of the church boys thought that any church that turned away such a person did not know God. In addition, forcing a couple to get married before they were ready was more likely to result in breaking them apart. Some of the older church males were of the view that the churches should not be hard and fast about marriage before membership. Several participants felt that churches should baptise the person whether or not they were married but thought that unmarried couples might have to choose not to have sexual intercourse until they were married.

As far as the community young adults were concerned 'God wanted them to come as they are.' They thought it was acceptable for churches to encourage people to get married but they should not be forced. What was important for most community participants especially the older males was whether the person wanting membership was genuine about their decision. For them, church membership was a person's right and not a privilege and there should be no conditions attached to membership once the person's commitment was real.

Whatever view people held about the Church's policy, there was general agreement that couples in such situations needed different forms of dialogue and support. Church girls for example spoke of encouraging the believing partner to discuss their decision with their partner while the boys felt the pastor should counsel the unbelieving partner. The older church males also emphasised the need for dialogue not just with the person interested in church membership but also with all the parties concerned such as the partners and children. Church and community young adults as

well as the older adult groups spoke in favour of close supportive involvement of churches with the couple and emphasised the need for the couple, not the Church, to decide what they want to do. Older church females focused more on practical support for the couple, which were centred on helping with arrangements for a wedding or facilitating the relocation of one of the partners until the couple was married. The older adult church groups considered prayer for the couple's guidance important.

Fourthly, all groups felt there was a disparity between God's vision of families in Cross Town and that of the Church. Not only did they feel that churches made distinctions between different family forms, showed preferential emphasis towards married families and families belonging to the Church, but some felt that the Church was also condemnatory towards some families. Moreover, the Church, it was said, had a tendency to stigmatise single parents as 'bad' and persons involved in sexual relations in non-marital relations as sinful. In addition, some participants seemed to see this stigmatisation as the Church being discriminatory against people of lower classes. The Church's perspective was therefore considered to be in sharp contrast to God's vision characterised by love, forgiveness and inclusiveness.

SUMMARY OF PERCEPTIONS ON GOD'S VISION VERSUS THE CHURCH'S VISION

Common Trends

Church and community groups expressed very similar perspectives on this topic.

1. They thought God loved all families equally, even though He was disappointed with some but willing to forgive them all.

2. The Church, they felt, was discriminatory and judgemental towards the common family forms and relationship patterns in Cross Town.

3. All the groups saw a discrepancy between God's perspective and the Church's perspective on families in the community. In contrast to God's equal regard for all families and God's attitude of love and forgiveness, the

Church was seen as demonstrating a preference for married families and for families within the Church.

Differences

The Church's policy towards cohabiting couples received contrasting responses from church and community participants.

- Although most groups showed mixed reactions, in general most community participants felt the Church's policy was not inclusive enough and that the acceptance into membership for cohabitants should be unconditional.
- In contrast, most church participants tended to see the need for some conditionality to be attached to cohabitants seeking church membership. Preserving the spiritual well-being of the person and the fear of committing sexual sin were the main rationale for the conditions.

Other Significant Observations

1. The mixed views expressed by church participants especially in the male church groups on the common-law issue reflected two things. One is the presence of some variation in theological positions among the Christians on the issue of cohabitation. For example, in the older adult church male group, a few seemed more liberal and were willing to concede to acceptance into membership before marriage. The other is an apparent sympathy, on the part of church participants, for persons in such unions. This was so especially among the older adult church participants. It seems possible that some of this sympathy might come out of some of the church participants' personal experiences or familiarity with others in their age group who would be faced with a similar dilemma. It might also be an indication that there is some ambivalence towards the Church's current policy. It is possible that they too have an intuition towards an alternative church policy but at the moment it lacks any theological base.

2. Another interesting observation was the support by the community females of the Church's policy for marriage before church membership. It is unclear why most community females were supportive of the Church's current policy in light of their own reluctance about marriage, but it might be a reflection of the extent to which religious values still have sway among that age group even for persons who are not actively involved in church.

3. There was an apparent connection between the Church's policy towards people in non-married unions and its views on sex outside of marriage. Church participants, in favour of the Church's policy, tended to justify encouraging common-law couples to get legally married by reference to their concern to avoid sexual sin. The interest of older church females to facilitate relocation of one of the partners seemed to have the same basis. A similar motivation also seemed to be behind the church boys' recommendation that non-married couples could sleep on separate beds if one of the partners becomes a Christian.

   What is more, it seems that this connection was not just in the minds of church members but community participants as well, so for example community boys felt that some churches would discourage a common-law couple, who were considering church membership, from having sexual intercourse until they were married.

4. The range of approaches being used by some churches suggests that their attitudes and pastoral practices could be changing. This was supported by the experience that one community female participant shared about the response of one church in the community to her and her common-law partner.[47] One got the impression that some of the churches in Cross Town may be offering more support to such persons than is commonly perceived.

---

[47] See p. 162.

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

All participants were asked to discuss their views on the churches in Cross Town. Again there was not much contrast between the views of church participants and those of the community groups. Generally their comments focused on three main things, namely:

1. Their understanding of the Church's purpose
2. Views about the Church's performance in the community
3. Ideas about what the Church should be doing to improve family life in the community

THE CHURCH'S PURPOSE

Taken together, the comments of the participants reflected a multifaceted understanding of the Church's purpose. There were moral and spiritual aspects to the Church's purpose as well as physical, emotional and social elements. This varied purpose was reflected in the responses of the community girls, who saw the Church as 'God's followers' and therefore thought it had a role in helping to stimulate people spiritually, physically and emotionally.[48]

In the teen groups, both sets of boys focussed their views of the Church's purpose on the more 'spiritual' aspects such as 'showing Christ's love on earth' or 'getting people to believe in God.' Similarly, adult community groups maintained that changing people's lifestyles and providing spiritual guidance were also part of what the Church should be doing. The older community females saw the Church as guardians of morality.

The church girls, while also speaking of 'winning souls' as a primary purpose of the Church, saw a connection between this and the Church's role of providing support for practical needs. They suggested that the Church needed to use its resources to help people with things like housing or with helping people to find ways of providing for their family. Adult community groups tended to focus on how the Church should

---

[48] See excerpt 5, community females 13-18, Appendix IV-A, p. 348.

offer practical support to people in the community, which included social responsibilities such as helping to keep the peace in a conflict filled community such as Cross Town. Socially, for many participants, the Church should be a second family and a place where love is demonstrated and experienced, a home away from home. Along these lines, the older community males saw the Church as an institution to facilitate the social interaction of people.

There was agreement that, as part of its purpose, the Church had a role to play in helping to improve family life in the community.

THE CHURCH'S PERFORMANCE

In discussing what the churches in Cross Town had been doing, participants pointed to programmes they were aware of, commented on their need to do more and levelled various criticisms of them.

Most of the groups were able to identify programmes and activities of some of the churches in the community. It should be noted though that apart from the community boys, all the other community males seemed to be least aware of the churches' activity in the community. This apparent limited awareness could be a reflection of a low profile of the Church's engagement in the community. However, considering a much higher level of awareness of the community females, it could also be a reflection that non-church women tend to be more acquainted with church-related activities than their male counterparts. Additionally, it may also suggest that the activities and programmes tend to be more appealing to women than they are to men.

In addition, some of the church male participants in the 19-25 age group pointed to ways the Church had helped them to have a more positive attitude to life. In general, the programmes which participants saw as indications that the churches were helping to address family life concerns included:

- Church school and youth activities, which helped children and youth in their personal and spiritual development.
- Homework clubs run by some churches.

- Family evenings geared at looking at various concerns relevant to the family, which participants from one of the churches spoke about.
- Support groups for couples and singles run by another church.
- Preparation sessions for people getting married and other forms of counselling which some pastors offered.

Having visited some of the churches during the period of the research, it was evident that some had special events during the month of May, which is commemorated as Family Month in Jamaica.

Nonetheless, there was a general feeling among all the groups that they should be doing more to help community families. Community boys felt some churches were active in the community but their programmes were not specifically addressing the concerns that would result in the improvement in the quality of family life. Most participants were of the view that the majority of churches in the community were not reaching out and helping people in the community. Moreover, apart from children and youth activities, family-related activities of the churches in the community, it was felt, reflected a bias to church members and did not seem sufficiently inclusive of families in the wider community.

This possible bias was evident to some of the community pastors who felt that some of their women's and men's church groups needed to be more outward looking as the following excerpt suggests:

> *CP 1:* *The Men's Fellowship would meet, talk among ourselves and discuss our problems. We have been trying to get them now to change focus. Rather than we just sitting among ourselves, the focus should be maybe, to take these sessions out of the church and get out there.... Many of us still tend to see the [church] family as us, the members who are baptised and are in church and we are oblivious to the needs of the wider community.*
>
> (See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 394).

Although arguably, the Church does have prior responsibility to its membership, it was clear that there was a common understanding that part of its role was to help others beyond its membership.

In spite of what they perceived the Church was doing, community participants showed a general ambivalence towards them as many of the churches in the area did not have an active engagement in social issues in the community. This ambivalence may reflect indifference about the Church's potential for any far-reaching changes in the conditions of families in the community. Although churches had a role to play in the community and participants were appreciative of some of the things that they were doing, yet they seemed to be suspicious about the Church's motives. This was reflected in the strong criticism levelled at them in most of the groups.

Community males, for example, felt that the Church was a moneymaking institution, like any other business. Teen girls (church and community) were also very critical of its use of money and questioned what they were doing with the money it collected. Some church girls were of the view that more of its money could be used to help people in the community as well as help families to increase their earnings rather than pressuring them to give more to the Church. However, other church girls felt it might be more a case of some churches not being transparent with its members. Church males in the 19-25 age group thought that the churches work with families might actually be hindered by the lack of financial resources.

Another criticism levelled at them by the community girls was what the participants described as a 'critical' stance of the Church towards certain types of dressing and hairstyles. They felt that most were too rigid in their dress codes and made people, who came to church in a different type of attire, feel conspicuous. Some spoke of the stares they attracted if they attended some of the churches in the community with 'processed' hair or wearing jewellery.

Some participants felt that many churches in the community tended to be judgemental of people in the community and that sometimes church members behaved as if they were superior to non-church people and that they did not really care for people in the community as much as they should. They also spoke of judgemental attitudes particularly towards persons who have children outside of

marriage. They felt that this judgmental attitude made it less likely that community people would want to be part of a church.

There was a commonly expressed view that most churches were too detached from the community. For example, female participants in the 19-25 age group thought this could be so because some church members were fearful of the community residents. This they felt hampered the Church's effectiveness and undermined the community's trust in them. They felt the only time one heard from some churches was when they wanted to invite someone to an evangelistic activity or a fundraiser or when there was a crisis in the community.

The church males in the 19-25 age group expressed that some churches were fearful of facing challenges in the community and instead tended to simply 'leave it up to God.' For example, when a church is faced with opposition from people in the community who might have a different view or openly oppose it, then it should not back away and 'write off' such persons but instead should try to sensitively engage them.

Moreover, there was the feeling that church members were too focused on the spiritual. In the words of a community male participant, ' the churches do not tend to deal with the realities that are here. It's like they are putting off their life to the after life. That is why I think they are not involved in more social things.'[49]

WHAT THE CHURCH SHOULD DO

The participants discussed various suggestions of what churches needed to do in respond to the needs of families in Cross Town. These might be considered broadly as in-reach and out-reach initiatives.

Church participants considered some in-reach initiatives specifically for church members.

- They expressed the view that focus on families outside of the churches should not overlook the struggles of church families and that if the Church was going

[49] See excerpt 4, community males 26-40, Appendix IV-C, p. 384.

to be a beacon of hope to families in the community, it had to lead by example. Christians needed to model good family lives for others to emulate. Participants thought that more work needed to be done with couples once they had gotten married.

- Churches should be more sensitive to the need for families to spend time together and not place unnecessary demands on members to be at many of its activities.

Both sets of participants suggested some out-reach initiatives that were relevant for both church and community families.

1. Churches should reach out to families both within and outwith its membership. In its attempt to do so, they needed to go beyond their physical walls and interact with people wherever they are. This, some groups expressed simply by saying that church members should visit more people in the community.

2. Churches should work together if they were going to be more effective.

3. It was considered important for church members living in the community to see themselves as examples to others in their community.

4. Churches needed to be more persistent and consistent in its work with families in the community. Their programmes for family needed to be more appealing so that more persons could benefit from them.

5. There was the need for more counselling support for families and more work with couples preparing for marriage.

6. Some suggestions were aimed at providing more supervised educational support such as homework centres and recreational activities for children and young people.

7. Others were aimed at addressing the concern about financial needs and included programmes like assistance schemes for families in need, providing opportunities for continuing education, skills training for employment and job placement.

8. Helping parents develop their parenting skills by facilitating parenting seminars, and being more available to parents who need help with supervision of their children were also seen as something else churches could do to address the concerns about parenting. One of the community pastors issued a noteworthy caution about parenting seminars however, as he saw it:

> *CP 4:* *...We have to be careful that it is done very sensitively. ...parents can start believing that they are failures as parents because they are not fitted in the legalised form or Christian marriage pattern. ...So many of the people who are experts on family patterns...fail to see the positives of parenting which are present in the community already.*
>
> (See excerpt 5, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 399).

9. Churches could also help by promoting more planned parenting in the community.

10. Other suggestions focused on wider community initiatives such as promoting the concept of community parenting which was said to be weakening in the community.

11. The need was expressed for more focused attention on empowerment of men and fathers and that greater effort should be made to incorporate activities such as sports as a way of making the programmes more attractive to men. There was also an expressed need for more promotion of father-son relationships.

12. In relation to persons seeking church membership who were in common-law unions, some of the common principles emerging from the participants included:

    - The importance for churches to have a clear but flexible policy.
    - Preserving the freedom for persons to choose when they are ready for marriage without coercion.
    - The need for dialogue and counselling with both parties as well as a willingness to offer practical support.
    - Additionally, there seemed to be a leaning by some towards treating such families as a unit if children were involved and to work at preserving it especially if the partners seemed committed to each other.
    - Some church participants felt that cohabiting couples should be included in churches' programmes and activities for the enrichment of married couples.
    - What seemed more contentious however was whether membership should be conditional. For some it needed to be, while for others it was felt that couples in this situation should be treated according to what their understanding of their union was and should not have the Church's perspective, on the priority of legal marriage, imposed on them.

SUMMARY OF VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

Common Trends

Participants demonstrated little distinction in their perspectives on the Church and its work with families in the community.

1. Most identified a multifaceted role for the Church and seemed to include its responsibility to help support and empower family life as part of this.

2. Most of the groups were aware of some things that churches in the community were doing which were helping families but more needed to be done for families within the Church as well as in the wider community.

3. Groups were critical of the community churches. In particular they criticised:

    - Their use of financial resources
    - Their dress codes which tended to exclude some people
    - Church members' judgmental attitudes
    - Their detachment from the community
    - Their fear of engaging with the community and
    - Their overemphasis on the spiritual and avoidance of real life issues

4. Many participants felt that if the churches in the community were to address the needs and concerns of families, they needed to consider both in-reach and out-reach initiatives that took them beyond their walls.

Other Significant Observation

1. The fact that church participants raised some of the same criticisms as the community participants did suggest consciousness of some of the challenges face by churches in Cross Town. What became evident in the church groups was an apparent desire to accommodate changes and to do things differently. The conciliatory attitude in the face of criticism displayed by church participants and community pastors, who were interviewed, was a hopeful sign.

In this section, the responses of participants in the focus group discussions were presented. The next section takes a closer look at two families from the community in an effort to illustrate some of the issues already raised and to deepen the understanding of family dynamics in Cross Town.

SECTION 3.4 CASE FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION TO CASE FAMILIES

The following case studies are presented primarily to illustrate some of the features of family life in Cross Town referred to by focus group participants. They serve both to verify what has already been said as well as to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of family. Two different family forms have been selected which represent what participants indicated to be the most prevalent family forms in Cross Town. These narratives summarise the experiences of real families that were interviewed but the names are fictitious to preserve confidentiality.

CASE FAMILY 1: DORIS AND TOM

For the first case family, Doris and Tom were visited and interviewed at their home. I had first met Doris at a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting at one of the schools in the area from which I was recruiting persons for the focus groups and she had expressed an interest in participating. She had come to the group discussion and because of her description of her family experience during the dialogue, I decided to ask if she would be willing for her family to be interviewed. To this, she agreed.

Doris was thirty-two and shared a common-law relationship with Tom who was twenty-four. They lived in a small one room dwelling along with Doris' six children. The flat was situated in a 'big yard' occupied by other members of Doris' extended family.[50] Both were low-income earners. Doris was employed as a household helper and babysitter while Tom worked with a construction firm as a carpenter and a mason.

Tom had three children from three previous relationships and though he did not live with any of them, he was in contact with all of them and saw two regularly. One of them stayed overnight with him and Doris from time to time. Doris described this child as being 'like mine.' She did however admit to not liking it when Tom had to

---

[50] A 'big yard' consists of various housing units on a single plot of land all owned by the same owner and often occupied by different members of the same extended family. See Chapter 1, Section 1.2 for a fuller discussion.

relate to the mothers of his children. She rationalised the situation by saying, 'I tell myself that it is his baby-mothers and I have baby-fathers out there and I have to communicate with them sometimes and if I have to do that, well I know he has to do it...I have to adjust myself to that situation.'[51] This is a commonplace scenario for many families in the inner city.

Doris' six children (aged two, four, eight, ten, eleven and thirteen) were borne to two previous partners but the fathers have very little contact with the children and do not support them financially. The two older children described Doris' first partner as not 'being there for them.' By this, they meant that he did not live with them and did not have an active affectionate interaction with them even though at that time he lived in the same community. Doris had hoped that her first partner, who was now living in America, would have been her life partner, yet she found his feelings towards her were constantly fluctuating and that he 'kept other women.' The second partner, she said, was abusive to her and the children. Furthermore, he was not interested in finding employment. The children described the second partner as 'wicked' because of his aggressive disposition and propensity for smacking.

Although the children did not have a strong bond with either of Doris' former partners, they had a better impression of the first. The children seemed to be enjoying a better relationship with Tom whom they described as 'very caring' and who was willing to play with them and help with the domestic responsibilities around the house. The children seemed to have accepted the situation of not being with their biological fathers and of having different stepfathers. Tom for his part had accepted the role as a proxy-father to the children and described himself as a husband to Doris.

They had been living together for about six months and were satisfied with the state of the relationship. Tom described Doris as 'caring' and she felt that the children and herself were comfortable with Tom. However the children had some ambivalence about how far the relationship between their mother and Tom should go. According to Doris, it was they who encouraged her to have a relationship with Tom, yet at the same time her second daughter felt that they should not get married. It was all right to live together but getting married in the minds of the children appeared to be taking

---

[51] See excerpt 1, case family 1, Appendix V, p. 386.

things too far. It seemed apparent that in the minds of the children marriage was not a necessity for family functioning and that cohabiting and marriage were two different things.

Doris had her first child when she was nineteen. That period of her life when she was in a relationship with her first partner was, she said, a searching time for her. She described herself as looking for love and never knew what she really wanted. She felt unloved and unsupported by her parents who did not show her affection and were often away from home. 'The way my mother was treating me,' reflected Doris, 'I said I wanted somebody to love me. I wanted to love and for someone to love me back and even though I tried getting it from the guy I was talking to, I never got it.'[52] So Doris wanted to have a child who would show her love.

The need for support at those crucial stages of decision-making was highlighted in Doris' discussion about her reasons for getting into her various relationships and her decision to have her first child. Complex emotional needs are often at the heart of people's choices about relationships and childbearing as Doris' story illustrates. Doris felt that with more moral and practical support she might not have had so many children. Though she had received some help from her extended family, she expressed that she did not receive as much support as she needed from them.

Unfortunately Doris was to find herself in a cycle of serial pregnancies, which made it increasingly difficult to achieve personal advancement. Her plans to further her education and even an acceptance to a vocational training centre had to be halted when she found out she was pregnant with her second child. She was to go on to have two more children with this partner. Because of his repeated reluctance to accept paternity of the children, she eventually ended the relationship with him.

She entered into a relationship with her second partner because she felt things had become very difficult for her and that the children needed a father figure. She hinted however that she was not looking for material support in that partner because he was reluctant to work. She was prepared to make sacrifices with the small wages that she earned on her own. Too often it seemed that people in the inner-city context made

---

[52] See excerpt 3, case family 1, Appendix V, p. 387.

relationship decisions under difficult circumstances rather than as free unencumbered choices. Doris was no different.

In Tom's case, none of his three children were planned for. He expressed that once someone is in a relationship, one should be prepared for the possibility that a child might result from the relationship. He was living with his grandmother at the time when his first child was conceived and he was not working. However he was fortunate to get support from his grandmother and an aunt who was living overseas. She would send clothing and other supplies for the baby. Additionally, he was determined not to become dependent on his family and was motivated to find employment, which he eventually did. Tom did not seem to fit the typical caricature of the inner-city father who is often pictured as irresponsible. There are likely to be many others, like Tom, who are doing their best to provide for their children and some who desperately want to, but feel they are unable to.

For Doris and Tom their ultimate dream was that their relationship would some day lead to marriage. They were also hopeful that they would have additional children of their own but they agree that it was not yet time. Equally important was the hope that all their children could live together. Tom put it this way, ' we will settle down, get married, have our family together. I can go for my kids so they can stay around me and everybody is here as a family.'[53] In this statement was captured the longing for stability and togetherness which many inner-city families hope for.

Both Doris and Tom seemed committed to correcting the wrongs that they had experienced at the hands of their parents. Instead of the neglect and verbal abuse that she received, Doris was very protective towards her children and wanted them to be assured of her love for them.

When asked what they liked or did not like about their family, the children said they liked going out with their mother but did not like being smacked. Doris in response to the same question wished she had all her children by one person like Tom, who she felt could understand and cooperate with her. She also mentioned that the children tended to be too aggressive towards each other. It is possible that some of

---

[53] See excerpt 2, case family 1, Appendix V, p. 387.

this could have resulted from the conflicting relationship they witnessed between Doris and her former partners. This too might be one way in which the children compete for her attention. Doris saw their behaviour as one of the effects of the fathers being absent. 'They want mummy to love them more because there is no daddy to love them or to share equally.'[54] The challenges of managing a household with six children were therefore apparent. There was no sign however in the children's description of their family experiences of missing a father. It is possible that for this family the presence of a stepfather and living in a 'big yard' with extended family might have ameliorated the effects of father absence. Alternatively the experiences of abuse and paternal neglect could have led them, like many other inner-city families, to learn to cope without the active presence of a father.

Reflecting on the needs of families in the community Doris and Tom thought that they needed to improve their communication and a willingness to accept when people, especially children, make mistakes. Related to this was the need to learn how to resolve conflicts.

Doris felt that churches should be willing to help people without any expectation on them to come to church. For her, people must be given the space and the freedom to make their own choices. She also criticised church people for being hypocritical and also suggested that church involvement should not conflict with one's responsibility to one's family.

---

[54] See excerpt 4, case family 1 Appendix V, p. 388.

CASE FAMILY 2: MARIE AND BETTY

The second case family interviewed was Marie, a single mother who lived with her three children in her mother's house. One of the participants in the community focus group had recommended Marie and she agreed to see me the same day I called her. On arrival, I observed that the yard had a number of houses and that she lived in what seemed like the main one at the entrance of the property. I later learned that her mother owned the property and that the other dwelling units were rented out but not to family members. The house Marie and her mom lived in was a multi-room bungalow but I am not sure how many rooms it contained.

Marie was a twenty-six year-old single mother of three children, each for a different father. She had her first child (a boy) at age seventeen who at the time of the research was eight years old. Her second child (a girl) was six years and the third child (another boy) was three years. She was no longer in a relationship with any of the children's fathers but she was seeing someone at the time. Each of the relationships with the children's fathers was relatively short (less than three years) and in at least one case it lasted less than a year. Marie's experience therefore typified the pattern of serial childbearing relationships that is seen in the research data.

I spoke first with the children but they were very shy and tentative in their responses. They did however sit together as a unit and were relatively responsive to their mother. They played with each other spontaneously and there were no apparent signs of rivalry between them. They all seemed to feel assured of their mother's love and referred to the fact that she gave them clothing and prepared their meals as indications of that love. However, when I asked if she had ever told them that she loves them, none of them could recall. That struck me and could be an indication of a common parenting pattern among many inner-city families characterised by limited positive affective communication between parents and their children.

All the children had some level of contact and relationship with their fathers and saw them from time to time. The father of the second child however was living overseas and was only able to see his daughter occasionally. Certainly the children did not have the experience of a resident father figure but as often happens in inner-city

communities, children do have some contact with their father. How much this lessen any possible effects of not having a resident dad is difficult to determine. It is arguable however that this is a better situation than no contact at all and even more so than when a father denies and refuses to accept paternity of a child.

Marie's first pregnancy had caused her to discontinue her high school education. She thought she was unprepared at the time and when I asked her how she felt about it, she responded, 'Bad, because I felt that... well I know that if I did not drop out of school, life would be much better today.' [55] She went on to explain that not being in school made her more vulnerable to a second and a third pregnancy. She feels her education and employment opportunities have been impeded as a result of not completing her high school education. There was a sense therefore of being 'set back' by her situation. Marie had some training in cosmetology but was not working and was not very concerned about finding employment. I wondered how much her situation might have affected her motivation for self-advancement.

Another typical pattern illustrated here was the extended family household headed by a mother/grandmother figure. Being a single mother did not mean living on her own for Marie. Betty, Marie's mother was a widow. She had been married to Marie's father for about twenty years but they had lived together for sometime before getting married. Together they had three children, Marie and two boys (who were twins). Betty also had another son from a previous relationship. All three sons had died violently. Two were killed at age nineteen. The other son, who had become a cocaine addict, died at age thirty-one. I tried to reach for feelings to imagine what that must have felt like but could only say 'that must have been very difficult for you.'[56] Yet the blank response I received to that comment made me wonder if her grief had not been mixed with relief since, as she went on to explain, they had all been involved in some kind of wrongdoing.

Betty had a difficult time raising her children. The demands of working to make ends meet meant that she was not always available for them. She also spoke of periods when the children had to be left with her mother. There were times of unfaithfulness

---

[55] See excerpt 3, case family 2, Appendix V, p. 390.
[56] See excerpt 1,case family 2, Appendix V, p. 389.

on the part of her husband. Marie remembered how her father's extramarital affairs began to affect her father's material contribution to the house. Eventually when he moved out to go and live with one of his mistresses, 'life got sour,' said Marie, 'because if I wanted to see him I had to go to his workplace. Money wouldn't come home again and all of that.'[57] Marie felt that multiple relationships, from her experience of being on the receiving end, sometimes made the women feel 'used and abused.' Similarly, Betty felt that it was unfair for a man to have many women because it inevitably meant that the financial support for his home would be lessened. Betty recalled that it was the support of her mother and an older brother that helped her to cope when her husband left because she was not working at the time.

There was a recurring theme of mother helping daughter in the family experiences of both Marie and Betty. Yet in spite of all the sacrifices she made, Betty recalled how Marie had a preference for her father. Reflecting on this, Marie noted that her mother was very strict with her. Parents tend to be more protective of their girls but often the extent of that protectiveness is related to the level of fear the parent has that the child might repeat their mistakes. It seemed that was the case with Betty. She had her first child as a teenager and did not want Marie to repeat the same fate, but she did.

Alternatively the strictness can sometimes be related to the high expectations a parent has for the child and the fear that they will be disappointed. Marie spoke too of her strictness with her children, especially her first son who she admitted to having a special love for as well as high expectations. She did not want him to repeat the mistakes of her brothers. I saw in both these mothers a concerted attempt to try to curb their children from doing wrong but choosing a method which threatened to do the opposite.

It raised for me the issue of parenting that was frequently spoken about in the focus groups. Parents, more often than not, had the right intentions for their children but might have needed to consider alternatives for working with their children in more positive ways to achieve the desired outcomes. Marie felt that she had made mistakes in how she was bringing up the children and that having a 'father figure' around

---

[57] See excerpt 2, case family 2, Appendix V, p. 389.

might have made a difference for their training and discipline. To emphasise the point, she made reference to the fact that when her eldest son was with his father, who lived in the same community, he was better behaved.[58]

Betty said her children for the most part were well behaved but at times would have conflicts between each other, especially the twins. She expressed that if she had her life to live over again, she would do without children because they were becoming so ill-mannered. She felt that even when parents try their best, the influence of misleading friends could be quite strong. In this reflection she may have been mirroring her own experiences. As Marie later said this challenge of misleading friends was made even greater by the spreading gang-war culture in the area and the growing pressure on boys to be part of a gang. Marie felt that there were things about her parenting that she would like to develop such as the way she speaks to her children and her methods for punishment. She also thought that teenage mothers in the community could benefit from some kind of training in parenting skills.

In addition to help with parenting skills she felt families in the community would benefit from support with the children's education through programmes like homework clubs and extra classes. She also mentioned that financial support could allow her to complete her education or to take the children out sometimes.

Turning to the churches in the community, Marie felt that, 'if the churches came together things would be better, but it makes no sense – as this church is here doing a little thing and another church over there doing something else.'[59] She noted that they could have discussions about family issues that were open to the public, but also visits from church members in their homes could be a source of encouragement for some families and a way of identifying problems that families have which they would not share in a public setting. Moreover, churches' work with families needed to be ongoing, not just one-off events.

Marie also talked about marriage and her desire to be married but there seemed to be a kind of fantasy harboured about marriage. Her mother noted, 'Marie had always

---

[58] See excerpt 4, case family 2, Appendix V, p. 390.
[59] See excerpt 6, case family 2, Appendix V, p. 391.

said she would be married by twenty-five' [60] and I wondered if Marie had any disappointment for not having achieved that. She spoke of wanting to get married when she had her first child to a former boyfriend with whom she still enjoys a good friendship. However, she was discouraged from doing so at the time by relatives because she was too young, but she regrets not getting married because she feels things would be better.

It was interesting to hear her articulate a very conservative view about sex outside of marriage being wrong although she herself did not follow that pattern. Generally, she agreed with the churches' position on common-law relations articulated earlier on in the chapter especially when one partner wants to become a member. She did however feel that if the woman decided to abstain from sex then she should be baptised even if she and her partner continued to live together. This pointed to the centrality of sex and sexuality in how the Church is perceived to assess non-marital relations. It would have been interesting to explore what might have been the sources of her values as well as what accounted for the apparent contradiction in her lifestyle.

This section has presented a synopsis of the stories of two typical inner-city families. It has helped to make more concrete the analysis of family life in Cross Town. The findings from the different components of the case study supplemented by interviews with various specialists have provided valuable insights. In the concluding section these will be discussed in preparation for the next phase of this theological enquiry.

---

[60] See excerpt 5, case family 2, Appendix V, p. 391.

SECTION 3.5 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The theological methodology adopted by this study brings into critical correlation the insights from analysis of the context with the normative sources of the faith. It is important therefore to examine what the lessons are from the empirical research conducted in Jamaica. In this section, two broad areas of insight from the research findings will be discussed. These are insights from the context about:

1. Family life and
2. The Church's current theology and model of ministry with families.

The intention is to be illustrative and to highlight those insights that have a bearing on the theological dialogue, which this study is engaged in.

Brief comments will be made on how the findings speak to the initial research questions and hypotheses. This will lay the background for the concluding chapter, which argues that inner-city family life in the Caribbean is a reflection of the continued quest for emancipation and therefore calls for a praxis that is informed by an emancipatory family theology.

INSIGHTS ABOUT FAMILY LIFE

Six significant insights about family life in Cross Town emerging from the case study will be highlighted.

Firstly, family life in Cross Town is a complex phenomenon with many paradoxes. For example, there was a paradox between the obvious desire on the part of men in the community to be responsible fathers and the experiences many participants had or referred to of father absence and limited father participation. Another apparent paradox existed between the yearnings for stable family life on the one hand, and the patterns of relationships that were inherently unstable on the other. Any attempt to understand and work with families in the inner city must be aware of these paradoxes and the complexities they suggest. It is not enough to say that fathers are irresponsible; one must try to grasp why this appears to be so in spite of their desire to be otherwise.

Secondly, family life cannot be seen in isolation but must be understood in its context. It is the realities of the context that shape patterns of family life. It seems evident on the basis of this research that at least four important and interrelated factors influenced the patterns of family life in Cross Town namely, history, economics, social conditions and personal choice.

As was discussed in Chapter one, union patterns, matrifocality, marginal paternal involvement and extended family households seen in Jamaica today and which were evident in Cross Town could be a function of a history of slavery. Similarly, harsh economic realities have impacted patterns of union and household formation as well as father absence and tendencies for serial childbearing alliances. Economic realities also bear close relationship to the social environment characterised by poverty, neglect, deprivation, crime, violence and stigmatisation. Each of these, all too easily and often subconsciously, was expressed in the harshness of some family relationships and parenting patterns. It is not enough to talk about poor parenting or abusive relationships without appreciating the difficult environment in which parents must bring up their children and couples attempt to thrive.

Families are also a function of personal choice or lack of it. What was apparent from what the participants said in the focus groups was that people made choices about such matters as relationships, contraception, childbearing and child-rearing practices. However these choices were made for different reasons. Some seemed to base their choices on cultural norms, material or emotional needs, personal preferences, religious values or a desire for social acceptance and status. Decisions about having children, for example, are often motivated by the cultural preoccupation with fertility and virility and less with consideration about the long-term responsibilities of child-rearing. It was significant too that in spite of the similar socio-economic backgrounds of both church and community participants, some of their perspectives and experiences of family were markedly different. This could suggest that religious values might have a significant effect on the family choices church people made.

For some however there is a feeling that there is little or no choice. Some feel trapped in an oppressive relationship; others like Marie and Doris (the two cases presented in Section 3.4), found their opportunities for personal and material

advancement limited because having their first child effectively curtailed their educational development.

There was the suggestion that personal choices were sometimes made without consideration of the consequences. For example, one of the young male focus group participants in the19-25 age group mentioned that he wanted as many children as possible not necessarily with the same woman, but also said that he wanted to be a good father to his children. For him, being a good father did not require him to live with all his children.[61] So as far as he was concerned there was no contradiction between the desire to have many children by different women and the desire to be a good father to them all. Work with inner-city families must respond to them within their context.

Thirdly, family for many just happened as a matter of happenstance rather than choice. One person in the church female age group 19-25 used an apt expression, 'patchwork' to refer to the different unplanned sub-families resulting from multiple relationships.[62] It was not strange to hear of some who referred to their unplanned experiences of childbearing or unfulfilling series of relationships as 'bad luck.' Unplanned parenting in general and early first-pregnancies in particular often create a cycle of apparently un-chosen life events that diminish control and create dependencies often manifested in serial relationships and pregnancies. When this happens, childbearing in spite of its desirable elements can become bondage from which the mother is constantly seeking to be liberated and rebellion against this state of affairs all too often is turn onto the child. Work with inner-city families must acknowledge that people make choices, that some choices are more considered than others, that some have limited choices and that some make inappropriate choices.

Fourthly, positive family experience is not so much about family form as it is about the nature of relationships. Although the research findings suggest that some people saw a connection between single parent families and things like unplanned pregnancies, poor parenting and lack of discipline, yet it seemed clear to most participants that the problems of family life in inner-city communities were not due

---

[61] See excerpt 4, community males 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 371.

[62] See excerpt 4, church females 19-25, Appendix IV-B, p. 367.

to inherent problems in the structure of single parent families. Family ministry must seek to identify the true source of dysfunction rather than fall prey to scapegoating.

Fifthly, there are some aspects of inner-city family patterns worthy of affirmation. For example, the tireless devotion and resourcefulness of many parents, particularly mothers, have been significant sources of strength for many families. Another is the support of extended family networks that has been a means of survival for many in the inner city. The extended family network often provides childcare options for single parents while they are away at work. Housing and material support are often other benefits of extended family networks. What is more, the presence of adult males in the household or 'yard' often provides father substitutes in the absence of a biological father. Added to this, as both Marie's and Doris' stories suggest, children do sometimes have access to their non-resident father. The fact that father absence is not as absolute as it appears and that families do find ways of maintaining connections with a non-resident parent is worth affirming and encouraging. It seemed apparent that a partial relationship with a non-resident father was better than no relationship at all. A relationship with a non-resident father however seemed more likely if the father continued to support the child financially. It is not enough to identify the problems of inner-city family patterns without taking account of systems that are working and seeking to support them.

Sixthly, there are other aspects of inner-city family patterns that need to be challenged in the interest of liberation. What becomes evident from the research is that family life for many in Cross Town could negatively impact people's material advancement, potential for relationship as well as their psychosocial and moral development. What is less clear but worth further exploration is its possible impact on people's spiritual formation.

The need for a more liberative experience of family was reflected in the gulf between what participants suggest are the markers of positive family experiences and the actual experiences of many families in Cross Town. Whereas positive family experience was seen to be associated with factors such as stability, nurturing relationships, two-parent involvement, time spent together and feelings of belonging and being wanted, yet many in Cross Town seemed to have opposite experiences. There is therefore a sense in which some people's experiences of family do not come

near enough to their expectations. Surely as the participants themselves recognised, families will never be perfect but the situation does beg the question - can family life be more fully what people desire it to be? Three of the patterns that needed to be challenged are the common practice of multiple simultaneous relations, the narrow understanding of fatherhood and the tendency to blame family outcome on 'bad luck' or other forces outside a person's control.

Multiple relations, in its present form, seem to foster family fragmentation by undermining trust, weakening partner relationships and encouraging what may be called multi-unit family networks which result from various childbearing unions. This, along with serial childbearing relationships, gives rise to what could be called multi-kinship family networks, that is, families in which there are multiple sets of siblings.

How a multi-kinship experience of family affects identity is a matter for worthwhile speculation. It is possible that this can accentuate conflicts of identity fuelled by uncertainties about belonging. As will be argued later, the quest for a grounded identity becomes central to the quest for fuller emancipation. It is possible therefore that the multi-kinship family experiences could be contributing to the identity conflicts of many Afro-Caribbean persons with the ultimate result that emancipation at a psychic and emotional level continues to be elusive and with it the promise of wholeness under God.

What also needs to be challenged is the limited understanding of fatherhood. What became evident from the research is that even where participants spoke of other responsibilities of a father they appeared to be subordinate to financial provision. This no doubt perpetuates father absence in a climate of limited financial resources. Persons who have no active relationship with their fathers however might be missing more than their father's money. They could be losing a valuable link for grounding their identity.

What may be worse is the fact that this missing link may not be acknowledged because it has become so commonplace. Yet its effects might very well still be there. The effects of father absence may be deceptively deep and long-lasting. This could be part of the explanation for the consistent reference, at times with obvious pain, by

participants such as the church boys and older men about their experiences of not having a father. The fact that it is not in the consciousness of the person does not always mean that its effect is not real or far-reaching. Although in many cases father absence was not absolute, the negative experiences with some stepfathers suggest that close emotional bonding between a child and another male adult often do not happen. The presence of stepfathers or older male relatives therefore do not always compensate for close bonding with a father. What is more, they may only serve to mask the deep subconscious consequences of an absent father.

Also to be challenged is the tendency to blame family outcome on 'bad luck' or other forces outside a person's control that in some cases betray a tendency to abdicate responsibility. This notion that family seemed more to be directed by happenstance than by choice needs to be challenged with an appropriate understanding of the balance between free choice and responsibility for one's choices.

INSIGHTS ABOUT THE CHURCH'S THEOLOGY AND MODEL OF MINISTRY

The research highlighted some aspects of the churches' understanding of family and their praxis with family. My comments here effectively respond to research question number seven in Chapter two which asked: **What do the activities, policies, teachings or other aspects of church life suggest about their underlying attitudes to family, and about their pastoral model for response to the perceived family needs and concerns? What do they suggest about the Church's effectiveness in addressing family issues?** [63]

One of the significant things about the current family theology is that it is not explicit. Participants tended to speak of 'God's standard' or 'what the Bible says' and did not always say what this meant explicitly. This lack of clarity became even more apparent when speaking with pastors in the community and theologians outside the community. A look at some of their responses when asked if the churches in Jamaica had a clear theology of the family illustrates the point.

---

[63] See Chapter 2, Table 1, pp. 61-62.

GREGORY: *Well, I don't think there is such a thing. I think that we have assumed that there is because I still think that when the church talks of family, the church is talking about a nuclear family.... I think we still feel that the other forms are manifestations of sin and dysfunction.*

(See excerpt 1, from transcripts of interview with specialists, Appendix VIII-A, p. 401).

TAYLOR: *No, I don't think so. Not at this stage. I think that the political family values debate from the United States is very strong especially in the evangelical churches rather than looking at what's on the ground and how we deal with it.*

(See excerpt 1, from transcripts of interview with specialists, Appendix VIII-A, p. 402).

DAVIDSON: *I don't necessarily think so. I don't think the church has a clear philosophy of the family but I think the Bible does help us...*

(See excerpt 1, from transcripts of interview with specialists, Appendix VIII-B, p. 405).

It was possible however to discern some aspects of a family theology based on the views expressed by church participants. This revolved around an understanding of family as a God-ordained institution. Family, it seemed, existed primarily for the purpose of procreation and socialisation. It was built around a legal marriage union, which was considered the basis for family formation. Marriage seemed to be based on a love relationship of partnership between a man and a woman. Some also described family in hierarchical terms as mentioned earlier.[64]

Sexual relations were also understood as belonging exclusively to a marriage union, which was often presented, especially in relation to cohabiting couples, as a way of preventing sexual sin. Church participants displayed a common preoccupation with abstention from sexual relations until after marriage in order to preserve spiritual

[64] See Section 3.3 under the heading - Perception of a Family, p. 135.

purity. In my view, this is a misplaced concern that needs to be replaced with the centrality of relational health for the couple and the family as a unit.

Within this implicit theological framework, single parenting, father absence, non-marital sexual relations, teenage pregnancy and common-law unions are simply seen as aberrations from the ideal. Most church groups had some participants who were willing to accept some of these family forms as authentic families but as was noted with the church girls, there was often ambivalence about seeing them as families in the same way that married families were seen.[65]

Without an explicit theological framework, the basis for one's praxis is also unclear and pastoral intervention is more likely to be tentative. Some of this tentativeness was seen in some of the church participants and community pastors who seemed stuck to a way of working with families in the community, which some were coming to see was limiting but had no theological basis to change.

In my view, because this family theology fails to acknowledge the authenticity of family forms that do not match the marriage ideal, there is little attempt to understand why they exist or what are their peculiar needs and concerns. Family life, experienced by the majority of the residents in Cross Town, is therefore not legitimated or seen in light of contextual realities that influence them.

In short, the implicit family theology seemed inadequate as a basis for effective family ministry in Cross Town. This was so because it:

- Was not explicit
- Seemed narrow in its understanding of family life and its acknowledgement of the contextual factors influencing it
- Misplaced in its emphasis on sexual purity over relational well-being as the indicator of the morality of a union
- Did not legitimise non-marital family forms but saw them as aberrations and problems
- Was judgemental rather than redemptive.

---

[65] See Section 3.3 under the heading – Summary of Participants' Perception of a Family, p. 140.

A glimpse of the inadequacy of churches' family theology also gives us some insight into the inadequacies of their model of family pastoral care. A failure to understand and include, within a family theology, the family forms most common in the context, in my view, has led to an ineffective family praxis with families in Cross Town. There has been a tendency to see these issues of single parenting and cohabitation simply as issues to warn about and for church members to avoid. Ministry praxis in response to these issues did not become a concern until persons in such situations were members or sought church membership.

For example, one of the community pastors lamented the fact that so many persons had responded to a recent evangelistic event they had in the community but too few had gone on to membership. In his opinion, various things bound many of them and prevented them from accepting the Christian faith. Among the things that he thought bound them was the fact that many were living a 'shacking-up life' or in 'concubinage,' as he called it.[66] I could not help wondering if the dilemma this pastor experienced might not have been resolved by a deeper understanding of the 'shacking-up life' and 'concubinage' which he seemed dismissive about.

Also, a glimpse at the perspectives of participants about churches in Cross Town will give further insights about their model of ministry. When these are put together with what was said about the programmes of most churches, the picture that emerges is of a model of family pastoral care that is:

- Discriminatory and judgmental of community families
- Not particularly geared towards the peculiar needs and concerns of families within the community but rather
- Focused on the families within the churches yet not even addressing the concerns of church families
- Not ongoing but seasonal
- Perceived as being at variance with God's vision of Cross Town families
- Socially disengaged from the community
- Meeting few needs and neglecting many others

---

[66] See excerpt 1, from field notes, Appendix IX, p. 420.

This suggests a model that does not prioritise social engagement in general and family life in particular as part of its pastoral ministry. Taking the participants' responses as an indicator, it seemed evident that churches in Cross Town were not considered to have a very effective family ministry. In addition, many of the community pastors agreed with this perspective. Most felt that the policies, programmes and activities of the churches in Cross Town were not adequately addressing the needs and concerns of families.[67]

RELATING THE FINDINGS TO THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND QUESTIONS

The experience of conducting and analysing the case study research and interviews has served to deepen my understanding of Caribbean family dynamics. But how have these findings addressed the research questions and hypotheses?[68] A response to each of these questions will be offered.

What are the experiences of family life for participants?
The analysis showed that there were many similarities between both types of participants particularly in their socio-economic background and in some aspects of their experiences of family but there were significant differences in other aspects of their experiences of family.

What are the patterns of family in the target community?
The findings revealed that there were patterns of family life in Cross Town, which were typical of inner-city Jamaican life as discussed in Chapter one.

How do residents and members of churches in the community perceive these?
The research offered some indication of how family is experienced and perceived within Cross Town both by its residents as well as by members of churches in that community. For the most part these perceptions were similar.

---

[67] See excerpt 4, from transcript of interview with community pastors, Appendix VII, pp. 398-399.
[68] See Chapter 2, pp. 60-62.

What are the perceived needs and concerns facing families in the target community and in what priority order are these seen?

The data captured the participants' perceptions of primary and subsidiary needs and concerns of families in Cross Town.

How is the Church and its response to families perceived by residents in the community?

The findings pointed to the community's perception of the Church and its response to families in the community. It identified the fact that the community did expect churches to respond to family life concerns but that those responses at present were considered inadequate. Moreover, the research revealed the community residents' suspicion about the genuine interest of some churches.

How do the perceptions of residents (about family and family concerns) compare with those of members belonging to churches in the community?

There were fewer differences between the community residents and church members than originally thought. There were many similarities in their understanding of family dynamics in Cross Town. Although there were also similarities in the participants' views about the Church's response to families, there were some notable differences in how they expected the Church to respond to cohabiting couples.

The findings also pointed to the possible influence of differing values on people's perceptions of family as well as to the possible clash between religious and community values. It is probably that this value distinction is part of the explanation behind the differences observed in the family experiences of the different types of participants.

What are the components of an effective model of church-based family ministry for Jamaica's inner cities today?

The substantive response to this question will come in the final chapter of this thesis, but what this analysis has provided is some idea of what are the likely shortcomings of the present model, the possible obstacles churches face and ideas and suggestions from participants regarding what churches need to do in response to families in Cross Town.

What are the elements of a culture-sensitive family theology and how does the current family theology of the churches in the target community compare with these?

From this analysis have come participants' views on God's perspective of families as well as an indication of the Church's current thinking. In the next chapter, these will be added to other considerations to offer a response to this question.

Not only has this analysis responded to the research questions but for the most part it has concurred with the main hypothesis of the study that '**family support and empowerment by the Church today are ineffective.**'[69]

It is probable moreover, in accordance with the original hypotheses that the Church's ineffectiveness could be partly due to:

1. A perception of the family that is distant from and not sufficiently sensitive to the cultural reality and perceptions of people living in Jamaica's inner cities.
2. Poor church-community relations or
3. An inadequate model of ministry for families in inner-city communities.

Although the study has not established a causal relationship, it can be said that 1 and 3 are reflected in the implicit family theology and the pastoral model that were discussed above. Moreover, the participants' opinions about churches in Cross Town suggested that people were open to them and felt appreciative of their programmes but that the church-community relations was in need of improvement. Conversely, the research findings did not substantiate the original hypothesis that the Church's ineffectiveness may also be due to:

1. The difference in background, outlook and experience that might exist between church members and inner-city residents.

In the case of Cross Town this gulf was not appreciable. Differences between the groups seemed to be based less on distinct backgrounds than on contrasting values.

---

[69] See Chapter 2, Section 2.1 under the heading - Hypotheses and Research Questions, p. 60.

What might be a source of encouragement in all of this was a discernible wind of change and an obvious sense that the churches needed to look again at themselves. These were seen in some community pastors, many of the church participants and also reflected in the discussions with pastors and theologians outside of Cross Town. Moreover, as noted earlier in the chapter, some community pastors showed an interest for more social engagement in the community.[70]

There therefore seemed to be a gap between a desire for a more liberative and engaging praxis on the one hand, and a restrictive family theology on the other. What may therefore be necessary is a more liberative theological framework that can harness this wind of change and which can provide a basis for a corresponding praxis.

What this research experience has crystallised for me is that any response to family in contemporary Caribbean society must be approached within the framework of the wider quest for fuller emancipation. The next section will address this.

FAMILY LIFE: A QUEST FOR EMANCIPATION

In Chapter one, it was stated that postcolonial Caribbean reality is characterised by a tension between chains and freedom. I wish to suggest that family life is another stage on which this tension is being dramatised.

This is so firstly, because family patterns in the Caribbean are a reminder of the legacy of slavery. They are partly a remnant of slavery society that ties people of the region to their past. In this way, they serve as a constant reminder of the far-reaching impact that a history of slavery has created for people of colour the world over.

Secondly, when family life is examined, as it is expressed in communities like Cross Town, there are patterns of family that mirror freedom and resilience but conversely, others that represent some of the seeds of persistent underdevelopment and have retarded the quest for fuller personal and corporate emancipation.

---

[70] See Chapter 3 under the heading – Why Cross Town, p. 110.

There are aspects for example that have facilitated the independence and self-development particularly of our women. Moreover, the flexible nature of relationships and household structures and the strength of extended family networks have helped residents to cope with the difficulties and uncertainty of changing social and economic conditions.

Yet the experience of a fuller emancipation might be hindered by such factors as the uncertainty and confusion of lineage with which many have to contend. Likewise, the unpredictability of family life presents additional challenges. Similarly, the inconsistencies in the transmission of moral and cultural values that might result from living in multiple households or from irresponsible parenting may undermine one's experience of belonging and a sense of identity that could make for fuller emancipation. Identity issues can be particularly acute for the male child who, without the active presence of a father, might not find other male role models to mentor. In addition, patterns such as childbearing in serial unions trap many single mothers in dependent relations, undermine the life chances of those children and perpetuate a chain of poverty.

Cross Town residents were free to choose who they wanted as partners, how many they wanted and when they wanted them, but in this freedom some created a bondage that perpetuated their poverty materially, emotionally and spiritually. Similarly, unmediated relationship break-up, which seemed common given their unstable nature, left many children exposed to neglect and bereft of material and emotional support and thwarted their chances of fuller emancipation.

Notwithstanding, what could be called a strategic preferential option for families might be a source by which a fuller experience of emancipation may be achieved. Such an option would prioritise family life and the support for families according to need without regard for family form. It is a liberative experience of family life that holds part of the key to a fuller experience of emancipation for Caribbean people. This is so because fuller emancipation for the descendants of slaves taken from their places of origin, who were stripped of their dignity and destiny, hinges on the restoration of at least four things: place, personhood, purpose and prosperity.

Emancipation becomes more tangible when one feels a sense of belonging or that one has a place in human history. Similarly emancipation is more likely when there is a sense of worth or personhood. One must also discern a purpose for one's existence. Finally, there must be the opportunity to strive for material prosperity without one's existence being constantly circumscribed by poverty. This finds agreement with Ham's priorities of 'cultural identity' and 'development,' mentioned in Chapter one, which he sees necessary for Caribbean liberation.[71]

As argued, the chains are not just external. Fuller emancipation therefore has both internal and external manifestations. Its primary source however is an inner change and should therefore be fostered by sources of socialization and spiritual formation. A family is potentially a significant setting for these.

One's experience of family life can either reinforce or help to overcome the effects on the psyche of social and historical factors that perpetuate bondage. It is in a family that one can begin to develop a sense of identity, an understanding of who he/she is, as one fashioned in God's image, as one of worth and dignity, as one with a proud history and destiny. It is in a family therefore that place, personhood and purpose may be restored.

It is family alliances too that have been the means by which people have coped with economic and emotional challenges and which in many cases have aided material and social advancement. It is family therefore that often sets the stage for material prosperity for individuals and societies. This has been the strength of the extended family and one of the redeeming elements of migration that continues to typify family life in the Caribbean.

Emancipation has come but not in all its fullness. The challenge therefore is to keep working for fuller freedom and the restoration of equality and dignity for Caribbean people. In the next chapter, a contextual theological framework and an appropriate praxis will be developed. As such a framework is outlined it will need to adopt an emancipatory orientation. Consequently, it should bear in mind another priority Ham

---

[71] See Chapter 1, Section 1.4 under the heading - Priorities of a Caribbean Theology, p. 50.

speaks about, that of 'decolonisation.'[72] In this regard, there is a need for churches in the Caribbean to be emancipated from an Euro-American image of the 'perfect' family so that it can acknowledge and effectively minister to the family forms that are common in our context. It appreciates moreover the need to affirm the aspects of the Jamaican family life that are positive. At the same time, it recognises that emancipation comes out of critically assessing the dysfunctional patterns and striving for more appropriate alternatives. This perspective takes responsibility for the future rather than fatalistically apportioning blame on the past or to antecedent cultures. To this end, the next chapter will engage the insights that have emerged from the context with those from contemporary family theology, scripture and relevant non-theological disciplines.

---

[72] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4
FREEDOM TO BE...AN EMANCIPATORY FAMILY THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a theological framework for family praxis in the Caribbean. In it, the insights from the analysis of family life in Cross Town are brought into critical dialogue with those from theological scholarship, scripture and relevant non-theological disciplines. This corresponds to what has been referred to in Chapter two as the **moment of theological reflection** (see p. 92). The process of developing such a framework however, is not without its problems.

One difficulty already alluded to in Chapter two, is the inherent conditioning that the theologian brings, of what is a family.[1] However, family should be understood as a cultural phenomenon. Meaningful theological dialogue that lessens the impact of this conditioning calls for the theologian to be knowledgeable of the culture and sensitive to it. This is most likely when one is from the context being studied.

> *Since the modern pastoral care movement begun with Anton Boisen in 1925, its literature has been dominated by primarily white, Protestant, North American, middle class cultural perspective.... However, the most effective answer to this problem is for more literature on pastoral care and counselling to be generated by people who are indigenous to the culture being addressed.*[2]

In an effort to make this cultural sensitivity more explicit, it might be helpful at the outset to propose a definition of family that emerges from the analysis of the context. This will be done in the first section of the chapter.

A second difficulty is deciding which of the many issues that impinge on the family should be addressed. In keeping with the methodology being employed by this study

---

[1] See Section 2.3 under the heading - Some Limitations in the Theological Methodology, p. 94.

[2] G. Asquith, in the Forward of *Caribbean Sexuality* by N. Waithe, Bethlehem PA, The Moravian Church in America, 1993, p. v.

and its interest to respond to the questions emerging from the context, the study will limit itself to these emerging questions. Consequently, it might be of value to highlight what some of these questions about family life are, which call for attention. There will also be a limit on the discussion of insights from non-theological disciplines to those that bear some relevance to the theological argument that is being advanced.

Thirdly, family life, like other areas of Christian social ethics, is 'exacerbated by the tension that exists between the Christian faith and the cultural situation in which it is lived.'[3] This tension is unavoidable, for Christian faith on the one hand is lived out in a cultural setting and therefore should be able to affirm and embrace cultural nuances. On the other hand, it should be able to challenge culture in the interest of the Kingdom of God. As one way of negotiating this tension, the study has sought to present a core theological and ethical basis that underpins the family theology being proposed.[4] These reflect both Christian theological and cultural priorities. They form the basis on which one may assess family well-being and determine how one may judge what aspects of family culture or current family theology should be accepted and which should be challenged.

Fourthly, the diverse theological landscape that is present in the Caribbean means that no one family theology will be accepted by all constituents. What is presented here therefore cannot pretend to be the last word on the matter. Any attempt at such a project however, can serve as a valuable contribution to the Church's dialogue about family and is indispensable if a coherent ministry is to be exercised. The task of developing a contextual family theology should be seen as a work in progress and this study as a contribution to a wider and ongoing debate. What is more, it is not an exhaustive survey of all that the Christian tradition has to offer to the debate about contemporary family life. But rather, it is seeking to respond to particular questions

---

[3] N. Callam, in the Forward to V. Panton, *The Church and Common-Law Unions* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), p. vii.

[4] "Family theology" is my preferred term rather than "theology of the family" simply because the expression 'the family' carries with it the connotation/notion that there is a single definition for family or that one form or definition of family is over and above others, both of which I disagree. My intention is to be inclusive of all possible families and to suggest how a Christian perspective might understand and respond to all families.

that have become evident to the writer out of pastoral engagement and the empirical research outlined in this study.

Fifthly, in what has been undertaken here, one needs to avoid the charge of universalizing or objectifying theology. The study is therefore an attempt to be more inductive rather than deductive. The chapter is presented in four sections.

Section 4.1 entitled *Families in Context* proposes a definition of family arising from the analysis of the perspectives about family in Cross Town. It will also discuss the questions from the context around which a family theology will be developed. Throughout the chapter, questions are used as a stylistic tool to reflect the dialogical nature of the theological methodology employed in this study and its focus on responding to the questions from the context.

Section 4.2 takes a journey *From the Other Side* and brings to the dialogue insights from non-theological disciplines.

Shifting Paradigms is the title of section 4.3, which offers insights from contemporary family theology and from the biblical narrative for this theological conversation.

Section 4.4 offers what may be described as an *Outline of an Emancipatory Family Theology.*

SECTION 4.1 FAMILIES IN CONTEXT

DEFINING FAMILY

The notion of 'the family' has often been taken for granted as having a meaning and significance that is universal. Different disciplines have argued its case throughout the ages as they have attempted to define what 'the family' is. These debates have not been without their ethnocentric biases, not least because much of these discussions have been limited to Western scholarship. This however is changing as contemporary family studies in the Caribbean illustrate. What this ethnocentric bias created was a paradigm of 'the family' that revolved around the nuclear family and was based on procreation within lifelong, contractual, monogamous, heterosexual relationships. This paradigm has not only been enshrined by mutually reinforcing arguments from various academic disciplines but has found considerable support in religious teaching.

In recent years, with the rapid changes in social organisation and the plurality of a postmodern world, these enshrined assumptions have come under scrutiny. Broad assumptions about family hitherto unexplored have received closer attention. Issues such as the sustainability of lifelong monogamous relations or whether 'the family' needs to be seen primarily as a context for childbearing have been questioned. This has resulted not only in a closer look at traditional theories about family but also at family patterns around the world. Formerly, Western scholarship would have considered family patterns that differed from the idealised Eurocentric forms as aberrations or sources of dysfunction. This is how polygamy, for example, practised in many non-European cultures, would have been seen. Today, the contextual nature of family is becoming more recognised and the variety of expressions of family being acknowledged. Moreover, the susceptibility of family life to socio-political, economic and cultural-ideological factors is now being seen more plainly. The result is a new paradigm characterised by variety and fluidity although one may argue that this has been the case all along. What is more, the task of defining family becomes more clearly contextual and the universality of any one definition limited. Family then should be defined in terms of how it is experienced by people. Against this background, a definition of family in Jamaica's inner city based on the analysis of the context will be offered.

Family in Jamaica's inner city refers to **the broad array of intra and inter household, multigenerational kinship networks, between people who consider themselves to have a special alliance with each other by blood, law, shared dwelling or mutual care**. Such a definition highlights the fact that family in the Jamaican context is relational, extended and functional.

Family, as we saw in Cross Town, is first and foremost relational because it is understood as being constituted by mutual relationships or alliances of some kind.[5]

Secondly, family is extended in at least three senses, namely:

- It is multigenerational and not limited to parents and their children but includes multiple generations in both matrilineal and patrilineal directions.
- It is extended beyond consanguineous boundaries to other persons of significance.
- It extends across household boundaries and often includes persons living in different households.

Family is also functional, in that, it is understood primarily in terms of what it does. This will be used as a working definition in this theological conversation. The questions arising from the context will also be made more explicit.

QUESTIONS FROM THE CONTEXT

Juan Luis Segundo, in explaining the hermeneutic circle (adopted from Bultmann and utilised as part of the theological methodology of Latin American Liberation Theology), identifies the first precondition for the process of doing theology as 'profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation.'[6] Such questions he would see as needing to emerge from the oppressed people in the situation. In keeping with this approach, it will be important to articulate the questions that reflect the perspectives of community residents, which have become more evident through the channel of this research. These were arrived at on the basis of an intuitive consideration of the family needs and concerns highlighted by the

---

[5] See Chapter 3 under the heading - Summary of Participants' Perception of a Family, p. 139.

[6] J. Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillian Ltd, 1977), p. 9.

study as well as the insights discussed at the end of Chapter three. Though the questions might not be the direct words of the participants, they capture the heart of their concern and challenge the Church to critically assess how it has traditionally understood and worked with families.

When the complexity, instability, unpredictability of family patterns in Cross Town are considered along with the tendency to family formation by happenstance, one of the primary questions that arise is, does family have purpose? Is family merely a matter of nature or happenstance or is there a Christian vision of the purpose of family?

Additionally, in light of the range of unions that exist, the challenges to gender relations evident in the experiences of conflict and the unequal distribution in family responsibilities raise another question - how can the resources of the Christian faith guide an understanding of relationships between partners in families? The variegated situation in the context summons us to consider not just a theology of marriage but also a theology of unions. A related question therefore seems to be, what constitutes a union that is a basis for sustainable family life?

Integral to this, especially when we consider the reality of matrifocality and female headship in Jamaican society, is the viability of the traditional value of male headship for a Caribbean family theology. Another question therefore seems to be, how might we, in light of the Christian faith, consider power and leadership dynamics between women and men in inner-city families today?

Yet it also seemed evident that the fragile nature of relationships between family members was an equally important matter for the families in Cross Town. Having regard on the one hand for the relational nature with which family is perceived in the context, but on the other, the experience of unfulfilled family relationships, a theology of the family should offer insights for more meaningful family relationships between its members. Another question that seems to arise therefore is, how should family members relate to each other and what factors or features constitute sustainable family relationships?

Then there are the twin issues of sex and sexuality. Speaking in an interview, about the patterns of family life in inner-city communities, sociologist, Hermione McKenzie states, 'the fundamental pattern is a pattern of reproduction.'[7] Early engagement in sexual activity, the prevalence of multiple relationships and the high value of childbearing seem to support this. Also, as was previously noted, very often it is the birth of a child that leads to considerations for a couple to cohabit.[8] If what McKenzie says is true, should sexual unions and reproduction be the rubric around which a Christian understanding of family is constructed?

The Church's pastoral response to non-marital partners also reflected a preoccupation with sex. There is therefore the need to respond to the question, what is appropriate sexual expression? This could no doubt have implications for the Church's pastoral response to non-married couples who engage in sexual relations, which presently seems to revolve around a particular understanding of sexual sin.

Analysis of the context also pointed to serious concerns about parenthood. These are reflected in an apparent priority of parent-child bonds over parent-parent bonds, a general disconnection between father roles and those of a male spouse, and the difficulties of parenting in a harsh environment. These in turn give rise to the questions about motherhood and fatherhood. One may therefore ask, what is the place of children in a family and what is the task of parenthood given the harsh realities of inner-city life?

The Cross Town case study gave an insight into the ways family life is affected by wider social forces like economics and violence. In addition, in view of the common correlation made between family functioning on the one hand, and social order and development on the other, it also seems important for a family theology to speak to the interconnection between family, community and society. Having regard to these considerations, another question arising from the context could be, how might families, communities and the wider society work collaboratively to promote and sustain more stable families?

---

[7] See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with Hermione McKenzie, Appendix VIII-C, p. 415.

[8] See Chapter 1, Section 1.3 under the heading - Union Types and Household Classifications, p. 22.

It is these and other questions that a contextual family theology should address itself to. The family theology being proposed in this chapter will bring these questions into conversation with insights from non-theological disciplines as well as contemporary theological thinking and scripture.

REFLECTION ON CARIBBEAN FAMILIES ...A WORK IN PROGRESS

Earliest approaches to Caribbean family research were prompted by an interest in explaining what were seen purely as dysfunctional patterns of family primarily because of their contrast to European patterns that existed at the time but also because of their perceived negative social impact.[9] Some, in similar vein, have taken a purely pathological approach to the Caribbean family patterns and speak of a breakdown or disintegration of family life or family values. To which I ask the question, disintegration from what? In my view, this approach fails to give due credence to the fact that Caribbean society is not only relatively young but unique as an ethnic entity and created by an unparalleled combination of historical, economical, socio-cultural and political factors. Caribbean society reflects the contribution of the many cultures that came together, but it is not a replica of any of its antecedents. Nor does its family patterns represent a clear breakdown of the family norms of any one of its contributory cultures. It is possible instead to consider Caribbean family life as a work in progress and this theological reflection as a contribution to a process in transition. This theological conversation should therefore resist the temptation to simply revert to old paradigms of family.

This conversation should also resist the temptation to simply accept current patterns of family as adaptations over which we have no control. Some of the less critical approaches that more recent family researchers have taken, have sought to place the patterns of family within the context of Caribbean historical and socio-cultural development without much focus on their effects.[10] These patterns of family in many

---

[9] See for example C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), Chapter 1, pp. 2-47.

[10] See for example C. Barrow 'Finding the Support: Strategies for Survival', in Social and Economic Studies 35:2, 1986, pp.131-172; C. Barrow, *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996), Chapter 3; R. Dirks and V. Kerns, 'Mating Patterns and Adoptive Change in Rum Bay, 1923-1970,' Social and Economic Studies, 25, 1976, pp. 34-54; H. Rodman, Lower Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad (London, Oxford University Press, 1971).

ways have served as a means of surviving the hostile social and economic conditions. They have become culturally accepted options with features, such as extended kinship links, that have lessened the trauma of single-parenting and have often helped to compensate for uncertainties associated with unstable unions and economic hardships.

These approaches to family studies are valuable for the insights they provide for a more contextual look at the family, but they seem to shy away from an ethical assessment. This ethical perspective is important, if positive values and patterns are to be affirmed and negative ones challenged in the interest of improved family life. Without this critical assessment, one can lose the impetus to challenge the adverse realities that give rise to patterns that are dysfunctional. Moreover, one will fail to explore alternatives that may be more compatible with a truly whole person development or to identify the support that is necessary for a liberating family praxis.

This reinforces the earlier suggestion of the need to propose an ethical basis for assessing family. This will be further developed at the start of section 4.4. The next two sections will bring to the discussion the other insights that inform the family theology being outlined first in section 4.2 from the non-theological sources and then in section 4.3 from the overtly theological ones.

SECTION 4.2 FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Various disciplines have reflected different theories and perspectives about families. It is important for theology to interact with these disciplines in its attempt to understand more phenomena like the dynamics of family life. The intention here is not to give a comprehensive account of the contribution of each of these disciplines to an understanding of family but rather to explore selected aspects of non-theological disciplines that have some bearing on the family theology being proposed in this study. In particular, the contribution of functionalism, feminism and psychotherapy will be examined. They are illustrative of the dialogue that have accompanied this process and cannot pretend to represent the sum total of non-theological disciplines that have contributed to this conversation. As the family theology is outlined in section 4.4, other influences might be referred to when appropriate.

FUNCTIONALISM ON FAMILY

Functionalism, in its most simplistic understanding, refers to the perspective held by many sociologists that family plays a particular role in the proper running of human society. George Murdock, the sociologist most associated with early functionalism, considered the four basic functions of the family to be the sexual, economic, reproductive, and educational.[11] For Murdock, these functions were universal because they were considered biological or instinctive. Many functionalists considered marriage and the nuclear family as the best context for the outworking of these functions. What is more, family work was seen as divided between domestic and economic and for some functionalists, responsibility of the former was primarily that of the female and the latter that of the male. For other functionalists such as Parsons, there is the added political dimension whereby the nuclear family becomes seen as a functional prerequisite for industrialisation.[12]

Some have taken issue with the universalistic perspectives of some functionalists. Sociologist, Margaret Mead for example contends that the nuclear family is more

---

[11] G. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 3.

[12] J. Bernardes, *Family Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 38.

culturally created than biologically given.[13] Marxists family theorists also question the universality of the nuclear family. For them, family must be seen within the wider social and political context of society. Early thinkers within this school, such as Engels, placed the nuclear family within the context of capitalist society and saw it as a reflection of the wider ethos of class divisions.

> *Engels examines the emergence of the nuclear family and male dominance in an historical context. He hypothesised that in the nomadic stage of man's social development there was a substantial measure of sexual equality...Gradually, the male sphere of activity became more specialised and distinct...As men acquired greater control over wealth and property they sought means to ensure that it stayed within their personal possession.*[14]

It is this he argues which gave rise to a monogamous nuclear family and female subordination. Although there may be questions about the historical accuracy of Engels' analysis, the point is, it uncovers possible ideological blind spots of the functionalist approach.

Yet despite the obvious criticism of functionalism, its basic insight that a family carries out a particular function offers a basis around which an understanding of God's vision for families can be articulated. The theological argument, which will be developed in section 4.4, is based on the assumption that family is given by God and if that is the case, then God has given family for a purpose. In other words, there is a God-given function for family life. This premise also finds resonance with the contextual perspectives on family seen in Cross Town that tended to see family in functional terms.

The traditional Christian view of an 'ideal family' has often been expressed in structural terms. It is arguable that this could be reflective of the patriarchal bias of its Judeo-Christian origins as well as the social and economic realities of those societies, which have contributed most to its development. In light of the significant

---

[13] J. Bernardes, *Family Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 38.

[14] M. O'Donnell, A *New Introduction to Sociology,* Second Edition (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1987), pp. 62-63.

changes over the last century in the social and economic role of the family as well as in the dynamics of gender relations and given the variety of family structures evident in the postmodern world, it seems more appropriate that a family theology be couched in functional rather than structural terms. This is the insight which functionalism contributes to the theology being developed here.

FEMINISM ON FAMILY

Feminism has provided some of the most robust critique of the notion of family over the last forty years or so. However, their position on the family has often been misunderstood and stereotyped as being anti-family and responsible for much of the so-called breakdown in family values. Feminist writers are at pains to point out that feminists do not all have the same views.[15] From the inception of the movement they have articulated varying positions on the family and increasingly so as the movement has progressed. It is possible therefore to identify various strands of the movement, some with anti-family leanings and others that are strongly pro-family.

Some often referred to as radical feminists saw the female biology, the biological family, childbearing and child-rearing as obstacles to a woman's progress. Others have seen the denigration by a dominant masculine culture of roles and values such as passivity and emotionality associated with 'femininity' as the real obstacle and argue for an affirmation of the differences between the genders but that those differences be seen on equal footing. Many of these latter feminists have fostered the importance of family life and the integral role that women play in it. For them, the role women and men play in families must be valued and shared and should not become a hindrance to female advancement in spheres outside the home. Womanists in particular have articulated a commitment to family and community. They speak of a 'politics' of wholeness that seeks to build community across the gender divide. Black women affirm a connection with men in a context of female-male equity. Commenting on womanist scholar Alice Walker's work, Delores Williams observes,

---

[15] See for example R. Delmar, "What Is Feminism," in *What Is Feminism?* Mitchell, J.; Oakley, A (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), pp. 8-33.

> *The intimations about community provided by Walker's definition suggest no genuine community building is possible when men are excluded (except when women's health is at stake)... And it is thwarted if black women are expected to bear the 'lion's share' of the work and to sacrifice their well-being for the good of the group.*[16]

Still other feminists criticised the dichotomy between private and public spheres and the relegation of women to the home on the basis of notions of what is natural.[17]

The common concern for feminism was the male power and domination held in place by a system of patriarchy. Gender was seen as more than sex, more than a mere classification on the basis of biological make-up. Gender was considered a social construct, which was not just about difference but allocated social roles and responsibilities on the basis of sex which led to conditions of inequality, hierarchy and oppression.[18] Feminists saw their common aim was to overcome the obstacles of gender inequality. What is more, feminism has brought attention to the tendency to overlook families as economic units and the work that women contribute in the care of their families is often unrecognised.

It is the suspicion raised by feminism about the all too pervasive system of patriarch, which informs this theological conversation. In addition, feminism offers helpful insights about the need for men and women to equally share in both the private and public spheres of life. In the face of the oppression of women trapped in dependency or abusive relationships and the uneven weight of responsibility they bear for family life, which we saw in Cross Town, this suspicion is well placed. Womanists especially, point to the importance of affirming the need for female-male partnerships for community building. This suspicion alerts one to the need to look again at gender relations in Jamaica's inner-city families and to see how the Christian faith might speak to the issue of gender in family life.

---

[16] D. Williams, "Womanist Theology: Black Voices" in *Christianity and Crisis* (March, 1987)

[17] C. Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *Public and Private in Social Life*, Benn, S.; Gaus, G (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 281-303.

[18] J. Chaplain, "Counselling and Gender" in Palmer, S., and McMahon G., *Handbook of Counselling* Second Edition (London: Routledge 1997), pp. 269-284

PSYCHOTHERAPY ON FAMILY

Another significant contributor from the non-theological disciplines to this conversation is psychotherapy. More particularly, four concepts from this field have a bearing on the theology being proposed: the therapeutic relationship, object-relations theory, family-systems theory and social constructionist narrative therapy. These offer valuable insights into how questions from the context about the purpose and quality of relationships might be addressed.

In spite of the partly deserved charge of being too individualistic, modern psychotherapy places much value on relationality. The relationship between counsellor and client is seen as key to emotional healing. Person-centred psychotherapist, Carl Rogers alludes to this when he says:

> *...in a wide variety of professional work involving relationships - whether as psychotherapist, teacher, religious worker, guidance counsellor, social worker, clinical psychologists - it is the quality of the interpersonal encounter with the client which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness.*[19]

The dynamics of this therapeutic relationship is considered central to the client's journey towards change. It understands relationship to be integral for the shaping of a person's emotional and psychological development and wholeness. What this aspect of psychotherapy suggests is that interpersonal interaction is integral to human flourishing.

This is further supported by object-relations theory. Its origin is most often associated with psychodynamic psychologist, Melanie Klein who, out of her extensive work with children, postulated that personality was laid down within the first few years of a person's life. ' Experiences and relationships in these early years... leave impressions on the personality that profoundly affect the individual throughout the life span.'[20] Human personalities are considered to be made up of

---

[19] C. Rogers and B. Steven, *Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human* (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), p. 89.

[20] S. Jones and R. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), p. 94.

internalised images derived from interaction with human 'objects' such as our mothers and fathers. In comparing it with psychoanalytic psychology, John McLeod quotes Cashdan as saying:

> *The mind and the psychic structures that comprise it are thought to evolve out of human interactions rather than out of biologically derived tensions. Instead of being motivated by tension reduction, human beings are motivated by the need to establish and maintain relationships. It is the need for human contact, in other words, that constitutes the primary motive within an object relations' perspective.*[21]

Not only does this theory offers insights into the importance of relationships to human existence, but also more particularly our primary familial relationships play an important role in our personality formation. It is this imperative of relationality that is the essential insight that the therapeutic relationship and object-relations theory offer to the family theology being proposed.

Another area of psychotherapy that offers insights for this dialogue is family - systems theory. Like other systems theories, the basic premise of this approach to family therapy is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and that any change in one part will affect the system as a whole. Two other important features of a systems approach are, firstly, that they tend to work towards some kind of equilibrium or homeostasis. 'Systems reach a "stable state," where their parts are in balance.'[22] Secondly, systems operate in accordance with a set of rules that facilitate its proper functioning. Family therapists therefore often speak in terms of functional and dysfunctional family systems and try to articulate the qualities that might make for strong families. Jones and Butman identify six such qualities from the family therapy school. They noted that strong families:

1. Respond positively to challenges and crises
2. Have a clearly articulated world view
3. Communicate well

---

[21] J. McLeod, *An Introduction to Counselling*, Second Edition (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), p. 40.
[22] Ibid., p.115.

4. Choose to spend time together in a variety of tasks
5. Make promises and honour commitments to one another
6. Know how to express their love and appreciation for one another

A systems theory approach to family therapy reinforces the relationality ethos expressed in other aspects of psychotherapy by seeing an individual as part of a wider group or family system to which he or she is related. In addition, it alludes to the idea that a family requires certain conditions to function at its best and that when those conditions are absent, the family will act to compensate for the missing parts but sometimes with dysfunctional consequences. Armed with this insight, the theological conversation being worked out in this chapter must identify within the resources of the Christian faith some of those factors or conditions that make for functional family experiences in the context of Jamaica's inner city.

This takes us to the final area of psychotherapy to be highlighted. Not only must we understand an individual as a part of a family system but we must also appreciate the wider social context in which that family functions. Social constructionist narrative therapy offers helpful insights for this latter consideration.

> *Social constructionism is a philosophical position which regards personal experience and meaning as being not merely created by the individual...but embedded in a culture and shaped by that culture. People are social beings. Personal identity is a product of the history of the culture, the position of the person in society and the linguistic resources available to the individual.*[23]

History and culture are therefore given prominence in how human beings are thought to make meaning of their existence. Stephen Pattison and Gordon Lynch in exploring the relationships between a social constructionist approach to psychotherapy and pastoral care note that:

---

[23] Ibid., pp. 152-3.

> *This takes the social context and condition of persons seriously and pays particular attention to the narratives that people indwell and use to understand their situations and relationships.*[24]

The social constructionist narrative approach to psychotherapy is mindful that people live in accordance with the dominant narratives of their culture and families, and that this narrative might impose an experience of life that is impoverished or subjugated.[25] It is therefore committed to helping persons to rewrite their stories and to live out this new story in their community.

There are obvious connections between this approach to psychotherapy and a praxis-based contextual family theology. It offers this theological conversation a perspective on the importance of cultural and historical narratives in understanding people's family experiences. In addition, a family theology should address the relationship between the family and the wider community. Most importantly, it offers the vision of re-authoring a new narrative when the dominant narrative of one's culture or family might threaten one's experience of wholeness. The family theology should critically assess the cultural narrative of communities like Cross Town and from the resources of the Christian faith provide the ingredients from which a new narrative might be constructed.

As seen in this section, dialogue with non-theological disciplines offers insights for the family theology being discussed in this chapter. Most notably, the insights from functionalism, feminism and psychotherapy point us to a theology that is informed by a functional understanding of family, a relational ethos and an interconnection between individuals, families and the wider community. They remind us of the importance of a culturally grounded understanding of people's stories about family but point us to the hope that new stories about family life can be written where old ones have oppressed or limited human flourishing. The next section will bring to the discussion insights from aspects of the biblical narrative and contemporary theology.

---

[24] S. Pattison and G. Lynch, "Counselling Goes to Church: Aspects of the 'Pastoral' in John McLeod's Narrative Constructionist Counselling and Psychotherapy", Contact 137, 2002, p. 16.
[25] J. McLeod, *An Introduction to Counselling*, Second Edition (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), p. 153.

SECTION 4.3 SHIFTING PARADIGMS

What is most significant about this overview is the picture that emerges of shifting paradigms for how family is understood. This will become more evident as some of the ways the notion of family is used in the biblical narrative and the theological debates about family are examined. Once again, the review attempted here is not intended to be comprehensive but is limited to issues relevant to this theological conversation.

FAMILY IN THE BIBLE

Scripture plays a pivotal role in a Caribbean theological methodology which guides this project. An attempt to break new ground or respond to context-specific or contemporary issues might need to appeal to a 're-reading' of the biblical narrative 'through the lens of one's own socio-cultural experience,'[26] in light of current thinking or knowledge but it must find reasonable support in the text. The reference to scripture throughout this study and more particularly in this section, considers the canon as a whole but mention is also made of theological themes, specific narratives in the Old Testament and family discourse in the gospels and epistles. The reading of scripture moreover is a focused one, directed by the questions I am seeking to respond to as well as a commitment to submit my theological intuitions to the light of scripture. How this is done will become clearer as the elements of a family theology is outlined in section 4.4. For now however, some broad insights that emerge from looking at how family is presented in the Bible will be discussed.

Taking the biblical record as a whole, the first insight to be highlighted is that its description of family life is characterised by variety and change.

> *The Bible discloses a rich history of complexity and diversity in family life. The Old Testament in particular is filled with descriptive stories of sibling rivalry and incest, enduring covenants and unfaithfulness, marital deceit and family loyalty - all of which chronicle a variety of family patterns or structures.*[27]

---

[26] E. H. Oglesby, "Cutting the Cheese a Different Way: Ethics, Hermeneutics and the Black Experience" *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 19, 1 (1991/1992), p. 96.
[27] H Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 13.

One of the difficulties that attends this variety and change is that there is not always any moral commentary that goes along with it. For example, it is clear that polygamy was widely practised by the leaders of Hebrew society around which the Old Testament narratives revolve. Yet when the New Testament writers recommend monogamy for the leaders of the church community, not only does it seem reasonable to assume that it is still commonly practised by other members of the church community, but there is no moral commentary made about it nor is there any clear reason why monogamy is being recommended for leaders. There seems to be a lesson in this about the changing nature of family patterns as well as the possibility that some practices may have ethical significance in one time or context and very little in another. What is more, patterns of family that today might be judged as immoral by many Christians, seemed commonplace in the Bible because they were at home within a particular value framework.

A second insight is that although there is obvious reference to the idea and importance of family life throughout scripture, there is no quintessential family form proposed in the Bible. Indeed speaking of the New Testament, writers such as Osiek and Balch state that 'few Christian writers were interested in the family as such.'[28] It is possible that this may have been so because family was a matter of consensus rather than dispute in Jewish society but the point is, identifying a particular family form as ideal or Christian is at best a conjecture and as such leaves room for discussion. We must instead, extract from the scriptures, principles that help us to construct a culturally relevant way of thinking about and transacting family life today; one that honours God's purpose for family life.

A look at the words used in the Bible for family also offers some helpful insights. As bible scholar Rogerson mentions, 'there is no clear equivalent in the biblical Hebrew for the English family.'[29] He makes reference to at least three Hebrew terms that could be translated as family and argues that the precise meaning varied, depending on the context, between a single household, an extended family or a group of people

---

[28] C. Osiek and D. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, The Family, Religion and Culture, Browning, D., Evison, I., (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 215.

[29] J. Rogerson, "The Family and Structures of Grace in the Old Testament," in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, S. Barton, (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 30.

with a common ancestral line. Similarly, in the publication, *Something to Celebrate* produced by the Church of England, it is noted that:

> *In New Testament times, the household or extended family (Greek oikos; Latin familia) continue to be the basic unit of society. It included blood relatives over several generations, plus other dependants - slaves, employees and 'clients'.*[30]

The nuclear family, held as ideal by traditional Christianity, could therefore be considered to represent a reduction of the original sense of the usage in the biblical text and does not reflect the range of patterns and extended concept of family that existed in biblical times. In accord with this insight, an attempt to propose a family theology might need to be open to diversity.

Another insight is that the experiences of family depicted in the Bible reflect the theological focus and socio-cultural influences related to the particular period of time. For instance, in the New Testament, as Oseik and Balch argue, views on sex and marriage, mirrored what seemed like an apparent glorification of celibacy over marriage and consistent concerns about sexual immorality.[31] It is possible that this view might have been influenced, not only by the strong belief about the imminence of Jesus' return, but also as Oseik and Balach suggest, by Greco-Roman medical advice about the harmfulness of sex.[32] Similarly, the Greco-Roman values for and apparent preoccupation with household ordering may have influenced what is commonly referred to as the *haustafeln:* household rules or codes (recorded in Ephesians 2:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1Peter 2:18-3:7).

---

[30] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 19.

[31] In 1Cor 7, Paul seems to advocate celibacy and points to his own unmarried status as an example to emulate. Fornication or sexual immorality is one of the most common items in the lists of sins discussed in the Epistles. See for example Rom 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5.

[32] C. Osiek and Balch, D., *Families in the New Testament World*, The Family, Religion and Culture, Browning, D., Evison, I., (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), pp. 117-118.

> *What the haustafeln illustrate is that the early Christians were neither morally perfect nor socially sectarian. They engaged their religious experience with their social reality....and transformed it to varying degrees of success.*[33]

It is thought that these codes may have been a reflection of the common concern 'among ethical and political thinkers of the time which naturally included a focus on the theme of the good ordering of the household and its constituent parts.'[34] It is possible therefore, that there was a seamless integration of theological interest with socio-cultural expedience. Just like family ethics in the Bible, how we think and act theologically about family today will be influenced by and must be responsive to current socio-cultural factors.

Jesus' teachings and sayings related to the family are other sources of insight. The gospel writers depicted in Jesus' sayings about the family what may be interpreted as ambivalence about the natural family. On the one hand, Jesus, on occasions, is portrayed as disowning his natural family, and discipleship and allegiance to the Kingdom are often placed over and against one's commitment to one's natural family.[35] On the other hand, it is obvious in Jesus' teaching about marriage that family life is important in His scheme of things.[36] What one can learn from the apparent ambivalence is the importance of working out the relationship between the natural family and the Kingdom family. But also it alerts us to the need to avoid idolising 'the family' in a way that might be inimical to the Kingdom mandate. It is important to honour the purpose God has for natural family life but the higher priority must be the cause of the Kingdom. Such a mandate invites women and men everywhere to know and experience the love and care of God so that the principles of the Kingdom such as justice, forgiveness, sacrifice and hope may shape human existence for good.

---

[33] L. Cahill, *Sex Gender and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics, Gill, R. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 161.

[34] J. Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament," in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, Barton, S., Ed. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 51.

[35] Mark 3: 31-35; Luke 9: 59-62; Luke 14: 26.

[36] Matthew 19:3-8.

Another significant insight from the scriptures that informs this theological conversation arises from the awareness of a predominantly patriarchal culture of the biblical period. It must be clearly understood however, that the writers of the biblical narrative had no calculated patriarchal agenda, though there is an obvious bias which reflected a certain understanding of the relationships between men and women; one in which women were subservient to men.

> *The basic fact of family life throughout the Mediterranean world was that the household was essentially a patriarchal institution, with other members of the household subject to the authority of its male head.*[37]

In reading the biblical text therefore, one has to be conscious of that bias. For example, the book of Genesis to which consistent reference is made in the family theology to be outlined, reflects some of this bias and has often been used to suppress women or support notions of female inferiority. As feminist scholars, like Anne McGrew Bennett, suggest:

> *There is another approach to the Bible. The Bible and biblical tradition can be reread keeping in mind the patriarchal bias of the writers and redactors and interpreters in an effort to understand our biblical faith without sexist blinders.*[38]

Without losing the value of what the authors have written, one can see beyond the bias to God's intention for human equality. This seems evident from a careful reading of the creation narratives.[39] Similarly, as some have argued, this notion of human equality is a distinctive part of the ethos of early Christian thinking and practice reflected in Jesus' radical openness to women during His ministry and a

---

[37] J. Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament," in *The Family and Theological Perspective*, Barton, S., Ed. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1996), p. 60.

[38] A. Bennett, "Overcoming the Biblical and Traditional Subordination of Women," in *Feminist Theological Ethics*, Daly, L. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1994), p. 137.

[39] See for example A. Brenner, Ed., *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); F. Hiebert and P. Hiebert, "The Whole Image of God: A Theology and Anthropological Understanding of Male-Female Relationship," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ In Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990).

comparable openness in the early Church hinted at in passages such as Galatians 3:28.[40] This insight will become central to our discussion about gender relations in the next section.

Additionally, Dennis Guernsey points us to an insightful way of understanding the use of 'family' in the New Testament.[41] For him, it is possible to consider its usage primarily as a verb rather than a noun. The infinitive form would then be 'to family' which has an all-together functional character. It is the purpose and action of 'familing', which then becomes the focus rather than the structure and configuration of family. How we relate to each other as a family or how the faith-community becomes a family for each other and for others beyond itself become more important.

In this brief review of family in the Bible it can be seen that the paradigm of family is not constant but a shifting one. Family, as it is depicted in the Bible, is characterised by variety and change and without consistent moral commentary about the diverse patterns. The implication is that we cannot simply enshrine a particular form of family as Christian or ideal. Family is a dynamic and a family theology should seek to respond to the manifestation and concerns of family within a particular context. What seems important to discern is not God's structure for family but God's purpose for family. Beyond this, a family theology may then seek to describe, with the help of the resources of the Christian faith, how the dynamics of family life within one's cultural context may accomplish that purpose.

This then is the priority of the theology being outlined, to propose a framework within which the dynamics of family may be understood as tools in God's human economy for the accomplishment of God's purpose. Moreover, for the family theology being developed in this chapter, the starting point is not structure but purpose and function of family. What the biblical insights imply is the importance of separating what is said in scripture from its possible gender and socio-cultural biases. Likewise, we must discern the current influences with which to ally our theological

---

[40] Gal 3:28 reads: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'

[41] D. Guernsey, "Family Ministry and a Theology of the Family: A Personal Journey," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidel, T. p. 221.

intuitions and we must esteem 'the Kingdom' over and above the potential idolatry of 'the family'. Having looked at some of the non-theological sources helping to shape this framework, and having also considered insights from the biblical narrative influencing this conversation, it is the contemporary theological reflections on family life to which focus is now given.

FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

The shifting paradigm of family is reflected in the range of views that are expressed by different strands of contemporary theology. At one end of the spectrum are those who feel the changes represent a drift from biblical ideals and require a restoration of traditional 'family values'. Central to what is meant by this, is a restoration of a marriage culture, where this is not as prevalent as it used to be, and a reaffirmation of patriarchal leadership in the family. At the other end of the spectrum are others, particularly among those with a more liberal theological persuasion, who in response to changes in family patterns, argue for greater openness to non-traditional family forms and call for reshaping theological discourse about family and family-related issues such as marriage and sexuality. This study does not offer a detailed exploration of the theological arguments of each of these. However, three crucial insights that are emerging from the debate, which this conversation can learn from, will be considered.[42]

The first is that any contextual family theology will need to grapple with the hegemony of traditional ideals of family life. In this regard, while the conservatives have argued for maintenance of the status quo, others, such as some feminist theologians, have felt the need to move away from the traditional notion of male headship. They, like their secular counterparts, have spoken to the effects of patriarchy and have challenged the traditional theological interpretation of passages such as New Testament household codes as definitive statements of women's subordination to men. Instead, they argue for gender equality within the family arising from a 're-reading' of the text which in their mind point to a revolution inaugurated in Jesus' ministry but which the early Church failed to capitalise on.

---

[42] For a fuller discussion of the theological debates about family, see Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground* or Ruether, *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family*.

They advocated a removal of the dichotomy between home and society with women and men having free and equal access and participation with responsibility for both. Roman Catholic feminist theologian, Rosemary Radford Ruether, for example, argues for what she calls an ecofeminist family ethic, 'based on the equality and partnership of men and women in family, work and society…'[43] Similarly, some such as the liberal theologians have argued for a more postmodern approach to family, which is open to the diversity of family forms that exist.

Yet at the same time, one needs to ask - does a contemporary family theology require that we discard completely the traditional understandings of family and its language of 'ideals' as part of a Christian vision of family? Certainly not, since there are valuable lessons still to be learned from past ideals about family. In the British context, excerpts from statements from the Church of England and Church of Scotland serve to illustrate how they are seeking to grapple with the hegemony of traditional views:

> *...It has seemed increasingly clear that we cannot assume that a particular shape of family, to the exclusion of all others, is God-given. To suggest, say, that belonging to a nuclear family is the only real way in which human beings can find fulfilment, and then to compare every other kind of family with that, seems to us unhelpful... Diversity like uniformity, should not, however, be accepted uncritically.*[44]

> *If the Church is to adhere unswervingly to its traditional standards and thought forms, it must support these with more convincing and positive arguments than it often has in the past. Conversely, if a change from the traditional stance is being advocated, the onus is on the advocates of change to explain why this is appropriate. There need to be guidelines which interpret and justify the ethical diversity the church is willing to tolerate, and the grounds for its decision making need to be articulated.*[45]

---

[43] R. Ruether, *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family* (London: SCM Press, 2001), p. 207.
[44] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 6.
[45] Church of Scotland, *Report on the Theology of Marriage* (Edinburgh, Scotland, The Church of Scotland, 1994), p. 269.

Similarly, in the North American context, progressives such as Browning and others, out of their grappling have proposed a 'critical familism' which promotes family life built around marriage governed by the ethic of 'equal-regard' that is characterised by equality, mutual respect, affection, practical assistance and justice.[46] At the same time, they argue for 'support for and connection with already existing families of single parents, stepparents, adults called to a vocation of singleness, and gays and lesbians raising children.'[47]

What seems evident therefore is that grappling with traditional views is inevitable, but in the process a contemporary family theology should articulate what should remain and what needs changing. As part of the struggle with the hegemony of traditional views, the next section will propose a theological and ethical basis within the Caribbean context for deciding what might be retained and what should change.

The second insight from the theological debates about the family is to avoid scapegoating some patterns of family. The tendency alluded to earlier in this chapter of assessing some patterns of family in purely pathological terms and to saddle them with the charge of being the cause of all kinds of breakdown in moral and social order needs to be resisted. Browning describes this tendency as an 'uncritical familism'.[48] This approach overlooks the efficacy of some non-traditional families as was seen in the case of Cross Town (See chapter 3 under the heading '*Insights About Family Life*') and fails to reckon with the combination of socio-cultural and economic factors that influence family functioning.

Ruether avoids this scapegoating by taking a holistic approach to family phenomena. Things like the possible effects of a market-driven economy on the pressure families experience are part of her ecofeminist family theology. Similarly, African-American theologians, like Wallace Charles Smith, recognise the impact of history and racial discrimination upon family dynamics within the African-American community.[49] So

---

[46] D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 2.

[47] Ibid., p. 3.

[48] Ibid., p. 36.

[49] W. Smith, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family*, Judson Family Life Series, J. Chartier and M. Chartier Eds. (Valley Forge PA: Judson Press, 1985).

far this study has sought to avoid scapegoating by reflecting the complexity of family life in inner-city communities in Jamaica and the contextual factors that influence those patterns. What is being outlined in this chapter must be consistent with the approach taken so far. Against this background therefore, family praxis must address both relational aspects of family life as well as the factors that influence family patterns.

Thirdly, family rhetoric is not always matched with pastoral practice. In a paper discussing the family-related discourse and practice of mainline North American churches, sociologist Bradford Wilcox describes the mainly liberal family rhetoric of mainline churches as characterised by an ethic of tolerance, inclusiveness and gender equality. Yet, he argues, that it is the conservative denominations, in spite of their more traditional, normative family rhetoric, which demonstrate the most active pastoral programmes for non-traditional families.[50] Wilcox suggested that 'the inclusive family ethic articulated in mainline congregations functions more as an identity marker than as a guide to congregational practice.'[51]

What one can learn from Wilcox's commentary about the family-related discourse and practice is that rhetoric is not enough. As much effort needs to be given to the practical implications of one's rhetoric as one gives to the rhetoric itself. Moreover, normative theological rhetoric does not have to mean non-inclusive praxis. The language of 'ideals' seems important to any discussion about striving for God's standard, yet without compromising this sense of a divine standard, we should act in such a way that families can experience the transforming power of God's love alive in a faith-community. Informed by these insights, an emancipatory family theology will now be outlined.

---

[50] W. Wilcox, "For the Sake of the Children? Family-Related Discourse in the Mainline" (2000), p. 22.

[51] Ibid., p. 23.

SECTION 4.4 OUTLINE OF AN EMANCIPATORY FAMILY THEOLOGY

This section offers a response to the research question, **what are the elements of a culture-sensitive family theology and how does the current family theology of the churches in the target community compare with these?** As was argued in Chapter three, it is possible that the ineffectiveness of current family ministry in the Caribbean, reflected in the work of community churches in Cross Town, may be due in part to the inadequacy of the implicit family theology discernible from church pastors and focus group participants. It was inadequate because it:

- Was not explicit.
- Seemed narrow in its understanding of family life and its acknowledgement of the contextual factors influencing it.
- Was misplaced in its emphasis on sexual purity over relational well-being as the indicator of the morality of a union.
- Did not legitimise non-marital family forms but saw them as aberrations and problems.
- Was judgemental rather than redemptive.

Additionally, there seemed to be a divergence between a desire among community church people for a more compassionate, liberative family praxis and a restrictive, conservative, theological framework.[52] The family theology to be discussed in this section, seeks to counter this inadequacy and to bridge the gap between theological basis and desired praxis. What is more, this family theology should respond to the questions examined earlier in the chapter that arise from the context.

This family theology is 'emancipatory' because it responds to the predominant quest of post-colonial Caribbean societies for a fuller experience of emancipation. As such, the freedom motif is central to it, hence the theme for this chapter - *Freedom to be*. In essence, it speaks to the freedom to be and become all that God wants human persons to be socially, psychologically and spiritually. Put another way, freedom to

---

[52] See Chapter 3, Section 3.5 under the heading - Concluding Discussion, p. 198.

be one who fully lives out the intention of God for humankind that transcends individualistic notions of self-fulfilment and actualisation.

> *The family looks beyond itself. It exists so that the human community might endure, societies be stabilized, and individuals be prepared to serve the wider human community.*[53]

In this section, elements of a contextual family theology, which sees family life playing an important role in the quest for emancipation, will be given. But what is a family theology?

WHAT IS A FAMILY THEOLOGY?

A family theology sets forth 'how the Christian faith understands and responds to family issues' in a particular context.[54] It is not a study of biblical texts related to family although it is grounded in the scriptures. There are three features of the family theology being proposed.

Firstly, a family theology is an attempt to identify theological and ethical resources from the Christian religion that inform how people understand and make more of their experiences of family life. What is offered should therefore be seen as instructive but not obligatory. A family theology is not an attempt to identify a 'Christian family' per se nor is it just about what we would like families to be, but it is also how we try to understand and respond to families, as they actually exist. We must therefore ask, what are the present networks of human relations and alliances that people experience as family and how do they help or hinder human flourishing? A family theology offers a Christian perspective on how one might understand these alliances and respond to them in ways that foster flourishing.

Secondly, a family theology must be concerned about family praxis. It cannot be satisfied only with theologically informed description or understanding of family

---

[53] H Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 17.

[54] See Chapter 2 under the heading - Hypotheses and Research Questions, p. 60.

phenomena. It must address itself to the question, how should the Christian community respond to family phenomena to empower, heal or redeem its potential to fulfil God's purpose for family?

Thirdly, it must be concerned with moral and ethical issues. However, what it addresses is not which family form is right and which is wrong. Conversely, it identifies what helps or hinders a family in whatever form to achieve their fullest potential as well as to provide a setting in which its members become more fully human. A family theology should therefore have an ethical grounding by which it assesses what will help or hinder family well-being. Moreover, its ethical grounding should be biblically based and culturally relevant. Yet, it should be less about how we restrict and control family life or decide what is or is not a family and more about how we help families to facilitate the love, care and freedom that God offers to humankind. Freedom, however, cannot mean anomie. Every society needs order and stability that are preserved by norms and values. A family theology fosters norms and values that enhance both personal worth and community well-being. For this family theology, the Christian faith is the basis for the norms and values it promotes.

This theological framework to be presented is first grounded within two cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, namely, the doctrine of God and of redemption. Furthermore it will be built on two ethical principles that are described as the emancipation and gospel ethics. These theological and ethical principles provide the foundations for the ensuing argument and serve as criterion by which family well-being may be assessed. We must ask of any given family, to what degree are these principles true, present or being fostered in this family and how do they inform family praxis?

Four elements of the family theology will be outlined. Relationality will be argued for as a central paradigm in God's intention for family life. Then theological principles and praxis related to male-female unions, sex and sexuality, and parenthood will be discussed. In Chapter five this understanding of family life will inform the discussion there of a possible model for inner-city family ministry.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

DOCTRINE OF GOD

Fundamental to much of the family concerns seen in Cross Town were issues related to the purpose of family and the quality of family relationships. Additionally, issues of personhood and worth are central to the emancipatory interest being promoted by this study. From the Christian faith, the doctrine of God provides a theological foundation upon which a Christian response to these concerns or interests might be built. Five aspects of a Christian understanding of God that inform this conversation are:

- God's intentionality
- God's covenant relationship with Israel and the Church
- God as creator and sustainer
- God as Trinity and
- The notion of the Imago Dei

Christians have an understanding of God as having purpose and intention in relation to the created order. This is reflected for example in the creation narratives.[55] When this is applied to family life, it gives rise to the theological premise that God has placed human beings in family and that God has done so for a particular purpose. As we come to understand more about the character of God, we also come to understand what God's purpose for family might be.

Much of what Christians hold to be true about God is communicated in the relationship God has with the people of Israel and the Church. One relevant attribute of God is His covenant relationship with the people of Israel.[56] In general, the covenant was an agreement initiated by God, which promised God's divine care, provision and protection and, in return, required Israel's obedience and loyalty. It was an agreement born of God's unconditional commitment to Israel. What the

---

[55] Gen 1-3.

[56] Gen 17:7; Ex 6:4; Ex 34:27; Lev 26:9.

covenant also pointed to was the fact that God was relational and interested in establishing and sustaining relationship with humankind.

The covenant relationship also conveyed the idea of exclusivity or fidelity. Out of all the nations God chose Israel. Moreover, God remained faithful and called Israel to be faithful in return. The covenant relationship then is characterised by unconditional commitment, perpetuity, fidelity and exclusivity.

God's covenant relationship with humankind offers a model for the nature of all relationships within a family. Family life, like the covenant, should foster and sustain relationships of care, protection and provision. As a mirror of God's eternal existence and presence with humankind, family life has the potential to perpetuate human existence. It does so through procreation, mutual support and care including protection of the most vulnerable such as the elderly. Furthermore, family life should have a dimension of fidelity or faithfulness worked out in culturally appropriate ways and which brings security and stability.

Another attribute of God is, God as creator and sustainer of the universe. What this suggests for family life is that the processes of nature so integral to family life are reflections of God's handiwork. There should be some interconnections therefore between how we understand natural processes in the family and how we understand God's purpose for family. The extent to which biological and social sciences help us to understand these processes better, is the extent to which they can be important allies for helping to discern God's purpose for families.

Another important interpretation that Christians hold of God is captured in the doctrine of the Trinity that affirms the coexistence of God as Father, Son and Spirit in a relationship of equality and cooperation. This again offers a useful model for our understanding of relationships within a family. Family members must appreciate their equality with each other and act to maintain that equality. Family functioning moreover requires cooperation. Family praxis must therefore serve families in a way that empowers the potential for equality and cooperation between its members and help them to cope with or overcome factors that threaten these.

The final element to be considered is the notion of the Imago Dei. The creation narrative depicts humankind as created 'in the image of God.'[57] We reflect God's image, for example, in our potential to exercise free will and choice, in our potential for creativity and for relationships characterised by love, care and justice. This notion of the Imago Dei gives rise to a presupposition that ultimately God desires each person to reflect the divine image within him or her and that the more one is able to do so, the more emancipated one becomes. Family is seen as having the potential to foster this divine image in each of its members. Family life may therefore be assessed on the basis of how well it helps its members to fully reflect God's image and thereby to experience fuller emancipation.

Christians have also understood the Imago Dei to confer worth and divine favour upon humanity and in turn provides the basis for human persons to see each other as valuable and of equal worth. Equality and worth of humanity are therefore fundamental to an understanding of the Imago Dei. This is of particular significance for people in a context marked through their history and contemporary experience by discrimination, inequality and low self-value. It provides a powerful motif around which family life can be mobilised to contribute to a vision of value and equality for individuals. The interpretation which is taken here, of Jesus' injunction to love God and to love one's neighbour as one's self, is that God desires for us to express the divine image in meaningful enriching relationships with God, with self, with each other and the created order. Attention will now be given to the other cardinal Christian doctrine that serves as theological foundation for the family theology being discussed.

DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

The paradoxes and gaps between expectation and reality seen in some aspects of family life in Cross Town signal the need for restoration.[58] The doctrine of redemption provides a theological basis not only for us to understand these gaps but also for how the faith-community might act to bridge these gaps.

---

[57] Genesis 1:26-27.

[58] See Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion, under the heading - Insights about Family Life, p. 189.

The doctrine of redemption holds that God has created human beings with free will and choice. When we choose what is good from God's perspective, the consequence is communion with God and with others. Alternatively, when our choice is contrary to God's will, the result is alienation from God and neighbour. Humanity, in all its frailty, has a proclivity to transgress God's ways. Yet despite humanity's unfaithfulness, God has taken the initiative to rescue humankind from alienation. God's redemption is an act of unmerited favour, which God does not force upon humanity but invites us to accept willingly. There are two aspects of this theological concept that warrant development for the present discussion, namely, the notion of free will and choice as well as the reality of human frailty. These will be explored in turn under the headings choice and responsibility and choice and human frailty.

Choice and Responsibility

Family in Cross Town is a factor, among other things, of choices people make.[59] What was evident though was that sometimes people saw themselves as victims of chance rather than agents of choice. Christians believe that human beings have been created with freedom to exercise free will and choice. However, what the creation narrative in Genesis two suggests is that God gives this to humankind within the context of assumed responsibility for the outcomes of our choices.

> *And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."*[60]

Taken to its logical conclusion, free will and choice must also mean freedom not to choose God or God's way.

The theological premise following on from this is that God has given humankind freedom to choose how family life will be transacted. Throughout the existence of the species, humanity has exercised this freedom in different ways with different outcomes and this accounts for the variety of family patterns that exist within a

---

[59] See Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion, under the heading - Insights about Family Life, p. 187.
[60] Genesis 2:16-17.

society and between one cultural group and another. Choices about family life however, are not without ethical significance. Nevertheless, what is being advanced here is that family praxis must honour the God-given freedom that people have to make choices about family life. It should not seek to interfere with or manipulate choice but instead should facilitate wise and appropriate choosing. By appropriate, is meant the choice most likely to result in human flourishing in accordance with God's purposes. In addition, what is important is to encourage families to take responsibility for their choices.

In accordance with this, what will be advocated is a theology of **'family by choice'** that challenges the cultural paradigm of **'family by happenstance.'** Decisions about partner, childbearing and nurture should be, as far as is possible, intentional choices and not factors of luck. Ultimately, people should take responsibility for the choices they make but as we saw in Cross Town, sometimes there are factors external to them that influence their choices. One implication of this is that work with families might mean helping them cope with inappropriate choices. This does not absolve them from their responsibility but is an extension of God's redeeming love that must be understood within the context of human frailty.

Choice and Human Frailty

Christians believe that people are imperfect and are prone to mistakes and failings. Human frailty expresses itself in humanity's proclivity to choose what is not in keeping with their divine image. In so choosing, humankind tarnishes the reflection of God's image in us. Also human frailty renders human choosing vulnerable to the various factors that shape human existence. Human choosing therefore cannot be extracted from the context in which it takes place. One's context determines one's options, one's personal values, or one's awareness of consequences, all of which influence human choosing. Indeed 'human beings are creatures of multiple impulses which sometimes conflict.'[61]

---

[61] W. James and M. Midgley quoted in D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 116.

The variety of human experiences that affect socialisation combined with the range of spiritual commitment or access to spiritual resources, means that people will develop different values and will make various choices about family life. For example, it was evident from the Cross Town study that despite very similar socio-economic backgrounds of most of the participants, religious values seemed to be a significant factor in family choices that church participants made.[62]

Inappropriate choosing might result from human frailty in an individual. However, there are some choices that are reflections of structural and systemic injustices and corporate sin, which have unfortunate consequences on family life. The family extortion by community 'dons' alluded to in the previous chapter is a typical example of this.[63] So too is the illiteracy, unemployment and material deprivation fed by a perpetually unstable national economy that is caught within the clutches of spiralling external debts. Added to these, are the violence and conflict that can make family life, in an inner-city community, a harsh reality.

Many of the choices people make are done in ignorance of their detrimental effects. But even where there is appropriate knowledge, frail human beings can still choose wrongly. Yet, in spite of that, the God of redemption, the God of the second chance is available to help us, if we are willing, to make the best of our wrong choices either by helping us to cope with the consequences, finding support structures that ameliorate their impact or opening new doors that allow us to overcome them.

While we cannot escape the language of ideals in articulating a family theology, in the light of human frailty, it is realistic to acknowledge that no family is perfect. Moreover, it might be helpful to talk about ideals of family life rather than ideal families. What seems necessary is the appropriate support that compensates for non-ideal features of families or which enables them to maximise the potential of their more ideal features. This, in turn, requires a thoroughly redemptive perspective on family.

---

[62] See Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion, under the heading - Insights about Family Life, p. 187.

[63] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 What the People Said, under the heading - Prevalent Family Forms and Why, p. 145.

As a primary source of socialisation, family can be a vehicle for restoration of the psycho-cultural losses experienced by descendants of an enslaved race. In a family where one can experience love and acceptance, one is more likely to be predisposed to love God, self and others. Family praxis built on redemption sees the importance of empowering families to be a source of redemption where broken lives and relationships can be restored. Likewise, family praxis must be motivated by a desire to restore to a person and their family whatever might be lost from their family experiences. A family praxis built upon a redemptive or restorative theology is sensitive, for example, to the needs of teenage mothers (like Marie, case two in Chapter three) for who pregnancy disrupts their education but who might need support in order to prepare themselves for the responsibility of motherhood and to continue their personal and professional development, so that their lives and destiny are restored to them.

Family praxis should rescue those with negative experiences which leave persons less than they could be. In this regard, the repeated refrain of being 'a mistake' which was heard from the research participants can leave emotional scars, but a family praxis that redeems should be concerned to help such persons overcome the emotional scars they might carry with them. Redemptive family praxis should also seek to rescue families from the surrounding influences that undermine family functioning.

A family praxis built on an understanding of redemption offers a second chance to frail humanity who has chosen or feels forced to choose wrongly and offers liberation from the effects of individual as well as corporate or systemic sin. It also resists the temptation to judge and disqualify one from care, but reaches out to redeem the situation instead. What this family theology proposes is a family praxis that seeks to create a context in which free will and choice are honoured, right choice is fostered and support to cope with wrong choosing is offered.

SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

How might we summarise the theological foundations presented here?

Firstly, God gives family for a purpose. One implication of this intentionality is that we cannot fully escape the language of ideals as we talk about family. For surely there are aspects of family life which are more ideal for achieving God's purpose than others. However, it is how Christian ideals are applied to family life and not what is an ideal Christian family, which guides our usage of the term in this discussion.

Secondly, God's purpose for family revolves around the Imago Dei. Humankind is made in the image of God to reflect that image and in our family relationships the template for the formation of this image is laid. Families are therefore made for relationships. Who we are and become are direct results of our interactions with others.

A third theological premise is that God's attributes of covenant relationships, of creator and sustainer, as well as the equality and cooperation in the Trinity, provide valuable motifs around which to develop an understanding of family relationships. Such relationships can help to perfect the Imago Dei in each individual member and the family as a whole.

Fourthly, family must be understood within the broader context of God's project of redemption. More particularly, God has given human beings the freedom to exercise responsible choice in relation to family, giving rise to the notion of 'family by choice'. However, human frailty gives rise to individual and structural sin, which predisposes women and men to wrong choosing. Family should be a place for experiencing redemption and restoration as well as being a recipient of acts that liberate it from the consequences of wrong choosing. It is in this framework that families will experience the freedom to be the channels of a fuller emancipation for Caribbean people. These theological foundations provide the criteria by which we can assess the well-being of a family and serve as motivation for family praxis. Attention is now given to the ethical foundation for this family theology.

ETHICAL FOUNDATION

AN EMANCIPATION ETHIC

The message of the Christian gospel is one of freedom. It calls us to live and work for the liberty of the total person. This includes spiritual, social and psychological liberation that is appropriate for each context. Kortright Davis equates divine sovereignty with divine freedom and sees human freedom as an expression of these. Davis further states that:

> *Freedom, then, is not merely the nature of God; it is the will of God. God wills that all human beings should be free, and the absence of that freedom raises questions about the nature of God's sovereignty in accomplishing God's will, and about the capacity of the human response to overcome conditions of bondage.*[64]

An emancipation ethic is an expression of this divine interest for human freedom generally but is of particular relevance to the Caribbean. It arises out of the post-colonial, post-emancipation experiences of Caribbean people. Such an ethic acknowledges the unfinished nature of the process of emancipation and that this has left repercussions. These include aspects of Caribbean family life that reinforce bondage and undermine the development of people's full potential. An emancipation ethic assesses the efficacy of something on the basis of how that thing advances the cause of freedom from the chains that linger internally and externally in the life and experience of people in post-colonial, post-emancipation societies. An emancipation ethic therefore affirms the kind of family experiences that liberate from the effects of the past and foster a fuller emancipation.

At the same time, an emancipation ethic is concerned about unmasking the present fetters of family life and equipping persons to live meaningful and productive lives today. It is not enough to undo the shackles of the past if we do not also pay attention

---

[64] K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), p. 8.

to the emerging sources of bondage or threats of 're-colonisation'.[65] For this reason, a contextual family theology must be careful not to exchange a European paradigm of family for a North American one. Indications of such a threat seem to be behind Rev Burchell Taylor's remarks in an interview, suggesting strong influence upon the Caribbean of 'the political family values debate from the United States.'[66]

An emancipation ethic recognises that the reconciliation and integration of varying cultural strands that are resident in the Caribbean experiences are integral to fuller freedom. As such, it values the richness of the Caribbean mixed heritage. It esteems what antecedent cultures have contributed which affirms worth, identity and belonging. In the shadow of the hegemony of the coloniser's European culture, people in the Caribbean run the risk of denying some of their other cultural roots, such as African or Indian. It might therefore be of value to acknowledge such links as the African origins of the extended family networks common in the Caribbean.

Furthermore, in the same way that owning one's total self as an individual is important to actualising one's potential, so too the acknowledgment of each of these cultural influences as well as other contemporary ones such as those from North America could be a source of a more complete emancipation for Caribbean people. This reconciliation and integration of a mixed heritage however, should not be at the expense of those distinct features that now constitute Caribbean cultural identity. In this regard, not only can we affirm the important link between husband and fathering roles, and the marriage ceremonies and rituals, which are present in both our European and African roots but we must also affirm family patterns that are now integral parts of a Caribbean identity. These include the long history of faithful cohabitation unions as well as an understanding of extended family that is not limited to blood relations. Two further considerations that inform the notion of an emancipation ethic will be highlighted.

---

[65] This term is often used to refer to the proneness of Caribbean people to imitation and susceptibility to other 'colonial masters.' See Chapter 1, Section 1.4 under the heading - Christianity Meets the Caribbean, p. 47.

[66] See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with Burchell Taylor, Appendix VIII-A, p. 402.

The Emancipation Ethic: Change and Choice

Culture is not permanent but changing. However this need not be directionless change as such change can lead to fuller emancipation. The emancipation ethic affirms a culture change for which we take responsibility. Such change should be in keeping with a collective vision for society built around the priorities of the Kingdom of God for love, equality, justice and wholeness for its people. Browning says it well when he notes:

> *We believe in the possibility of religio-cultural change, the power of cultural movements, and the efficacy of debate and rational persuasion both to alter human behaviour and to enable people to devise wise programs of intervention.*[67]

A family theology informed by an emancipation ethic ought to critique and challenge present culture towards positive change, as well as formulate a more emancipatory theological agenda where appropriate. In this regard, some of the patterns of family that need to be challenged have been identified.[68] In like manner if the Church is to offer a Christian vision of families that fosters emancipation, it must be willing to free itself from theological thinking that simply perpetuate the bondage some inner-city families experience.

One of the things that is essential for emancipatory change is personal initiative. The premise is that emancipation fosters and is fostered by creative and responsible exercise of will. It is Caribbean people therefore who must take initiative to challenge the post-colonial psyche perpetuated through some family experiences and take responsibility for a destiny with a more emancipatory family life. Like the Sam Sharp of old who resisted the oppressive system of slavery, Caribbean people must take responsibility for cultural change for family emancipation.[69]

---

[67] D. Browning, et al, *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground,* Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), pp. 21-22.

[68] See Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion, under the heading -Insights about Family Life, p. 189.

[69] See Sam Sharp Rebellion mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 under the heading - Chains and Freedom in Colonialism and Slavery, p. 5.

In order to exercise creative and responsible will, people must love and trust who they are and what they choose. They must also be able to see and experience the benefits of their choices. There is therefore no place for a family praxis that stigmatises or seeks to control. A family theology based on the emancipation ethic should therefore foster family life, which develops in its members, love and trust for themselves and each other and their potential to exercise responsible choices. It must also foster a critical consciousness that chooses on the basis of what is in the best interest of the family and community.

The emancipation ethic reaffirms the notion of 'family by choice' referred to earlier in this section. [70] A family theology built around the priority of free choice acknowledges and honours the fact that the processes leading to family formation can be freely chosen. This understanding of family should also expect and value the diversity which free choice implies. Equally important, is the willingness to take responsibilities for one's choice even when the consequences of that choosing are unexpected and difficult. An emancipation ethic should therefore promote knowledge and skills for choosing, and clear values that guide decision-making. Family praxis with an emancipation ethic ought to respect each other's choices, regardless of the consequences without stigmatising those whose choices do not accord with our own ideals.

The Emancipation Ethic: Empowerment and Advocacy

An emancipation ethic also affirms that regardless of one's experience of dysfunction, one has the potential to change. Formative experiences are powerful determinants of personality but as University of the West Indies lecturer, Hermione McKenzie stated in an interview with her, 'the human being has choices, vision and ability to move beyond his or her own formative experience.'[71] There is a focus in this ethic therefore, on human potential for goodness rather than a preoccupation with the fallen state of humankind. It is more concerned with the possibility of restoration of God's image to humankind than in classification into sinner and saint. The notion of empowerment is therefore important to this ethic for it is when people

---

[70] See p. 236.

[71] See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with Hermione McKenzie, Appendix VIII-C, p. 416.

are empowered that they can more fully realise their potential by appropriate choosing.

The emancipation ethic should cut across the traditional hegemonic approach whereby the Church seeks to impose its stereotypes of family in its preaching, pastoral practice and church discipline. This old way fails to acknowledge people's freedom to choose and excludes those whose choices do not accord with church teaching. The consistent preaching about 'living in sin' heaped upon those who practise sexual relations in unions other than legal marriage or the direct or indirect pressure for cohabiting couples to legalise their unions before church membership are reflections of this traditional approach.

The emancipation ethic finally is an ethic of struggle. It encourages advocacy on behalf of families. It challenges the structures and forces of poverty, psychological barriers, lack of information or education as well as government policy that undermines people's potential to freely choose or to own the responsibility for their actions. This brings us to the next ethical underpinning of this family theology.

A GOSPEL ETHIC... FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL TODAY

In Chapter one, reference was made to Davis' allusion to religion being an important resource for the emancipation of Caribbean people.[72] Mention was also made of the importance for Caribbean theology to be grounded in a conviction that the gospel has a unique contribution to make to achieve inner healing and reconciliation.[73] The gospel ethic arises out of this conviction.

The gospel says Lisa Sowle Cahill:

> *.... is about the good news of God's reign, and an invitation to live within it, not about timeless systems of moral instruction. The gospel certainly requires that all relationships be reconfigured by life in the new community inspired by the Lord.*[74]

---

[72] Chapter 1, Section 1.4 under the heading - Emancipation Still Coming, p. 43.

[73] Chapter 1, Section 1.4 under the heading - Priorities of a Caribbean Theology, p. 52.

[74] L. Cahill, *Sex Gender and Christian Ethics*, New Studies In Christian Ethics, Gill, R. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 121.

It is motivated by a vision for God's Kingdom reign over creation. Moreover, it is motivated by an understanding of the depth of God's love for creation and a desire to uphold the integrity of the gospel. By integrity is meant the consistency between word and work, between its means and its end and between message and messenger. It therefore asks the question, is this word or action in the interest of the gospel today? As such, it recognises that because the realities and concerns in one place and time might differ from another, actions that might have been in the interest of the gospel at a previous point in history might not be today. The gospel ethic assesses something according to how that thing advances or hinders the announcement or enactment of God's good news to all people today.

In order to develop this concept of a gospel ethic, four features, which are illustrated in the life of Jesus who is the supreme practitioner of the gospel ethic, will be briefly considered.

Four Features of the Gospel Ethic

The first feature of the gospel ethic is that it is willing to challenge the status quo. It distinguishes between the integrity of the gospel and maintaining the status quo. Sometimes our actions in the interest of the gospel might require that we act in accordance with prevailing standards and expectations. We can choose to take certain actions or avoid others because we wish to protect, respect and esteem the standard with which the gospel should be regarded. However, too often our actions merely maintain the status quo and are not truly in the interest of the gospel. The family theology informed by a gospel ethic distinguishes between actions that guard the integrity of the gospel and others that simply keep the status quo. It challenges the status quo when not to do so would bring the integrity of the gospel into question.

Jesus attracted the charge, from devout Jews, of being a sinner because He associated with people who, according to the status quo, were unworthy of His company. His actions could have been interpreted as bringing the cause of His message into disrepute. However, Jesus saw His associations as a greater priority for the cause of the gospel than simply trying to maintain the status quo.

Much of the Church's pastoral policy towards people in non-legal cohabitation finds itself in this precise dilemma. To accept such people into membership is often seen by some as a lowering of the Church's standard and therefore detrimental to the integrity of the gospel. A family theology informed by a gospel ethic will need to decide whether not accepting them into membership might not be more harmful for the gospel's integrity. More will be said later when the issue of unions is examined.

The second feature of the gospel ethic is, it affirms that God's gospel should be good news to those who hear it. The message can only be good news if it responds to the concerns and realities that are relevant to its hearers. Liberation is only good news if it speaks to the relevant sources of oppression. There is evidence to suggest that single parent households tend to be poorer with higher proportions of delinquent children coming from them compared with two-parent families.[75] But is the source of these family problems the single parent household per se or other factors that render the single parent family vulnerable? Similarly, does liberation of families from low father participation come from simply telling men to be more responsible or by learning to do without them? The family theology should speak to the real source of these problems.

The message moreover can only be good news if it points to hope and benefit. A Christian vision of the family is good news when it points to how it benefits individuals, families, communities and societies and infuses hope that family life can be better.

When Jesus met the paralysed man at the pool of Bethesda waiting for its waters to bubble up so he could be healed, Jesus offered him an alternative route to healing.[76] He addressed the real source of the man's oppression. When Jesus asked if he wanted to be healed, there was in the man's response the suggestion of despair and dependency. 'I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.'[77] Jesus challenged the

---

[75] D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common* Ground, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 53.

[76] John 5:1-15 (New International Version - NIV).

[77] John 5: 7 (NIV).

man to exercise his faith when He said, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.'[78] Jesus also offered hope and benefit to a man who was becoming hopeless.

As this family theology challenges cultural patterns of family such as multiple relationships, or patterns that are traditionally Christian such as male headship, it must point to alternatives that offer hope and benefit. In this regard, the social sciences can offer insights of alternative patterns that are evidence-based. The gospel ethic leads us to critically assess, on the basis of available evidence, which patterns of family life offer hope or benefit and which do not. Moreover, it motivates a search for alternatives that are truly liberating.

A third feature of the gospel ethic is that it affirms inclusiveness. The gospel, as it is proclaimed and enacted, must seek to include rather than exclude. When others were shunning the despised tax collector called Zacchaeus, Jesus accepted him and was not afraid to be seen with him and his associates.[79] Jesus' encounters with people like Zacchaeus, illustrated inclusiveness. The gospel ethic asks of family praxis, does this practice, programme or policy draw people closer to God and the faith-community or does it push them away? If the Church is to minister to the needs of different families, it has to develop a more compassionate attitude to all forms of families based on a deeper understanding of the social and historical factors shaping family life in the Caribbean. The 'acid test' of this is, how churches relate to non-church families that do not fit the Church's ideal. Its range of ministries should be inclusive enough to work with church and non-church families.

Fourthly the gospel ethic affirms the transforming power and intention of the gospel. Family life should be judged on the basis of its potential to positively transform the lives and situations of its members. Not only did Jesus include Zacchaeus but he was also positively transformed by Jesus' presence. As the gospel account indicates, Zacchaeus agreed to make restitution for his unfair financial dealing.[80] When this feature of the gospel ethic is applied to the practice of serial childbearing unions, this pattern of family is found wanting because it hinders positive transformation. A

---

[78] John 5: 8 (NIV).
[79] Luke 19:1-10.
[80] Luke 19:8.

family theology built around this ethic should foster aspects of family life that positively transforms lives and thereby advance the cause of a fuller emancipation.

SUMMARY OF THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION

The theology of the family being developed in this chapter is built upon two ethical principles - the emancipation ethic and the gospel ethic. The emancipation ethic assesses family life and praxis on the basis of how it advances the quest for fuller emancipation by helping or hindering:

- The reconciliation and integration of family insights from the mixed cultural heritage of the Caribbean.
- The affirmation of a uniquely Caribbean identity.
- The unmasking of current threats to re-colonisation for family life.
- Cultural shifts in family life in keeping with the Kingdom vision.
- The empowerment of personal initiative for 'families by choice' and
- Advocacy on behalf of family well-being.

The gospel ethic assesses family life and praxis based on how it aids or hinders the proclamation of God's good news. It is motivated by a vision of the Kingdom of God, an understanding of the depth of God's love for all and a concern to preserve the integrity of the gospel. This ethic moreover affirms family life and praxis which should be willing to challenge the status quo, should be good news to its hearers, should be inclusive and transformational.

On the strength of these theological and ethical foundations, four elements of a Caribbean family theology will be described.

ELEMENTS OF A FAMILY THEOLOGY

RELATIONALITY – THE KEY TO GOD'S INTENTION FOR FAMILY

In this element of the family theology being proposed, the priority of relationality will be considered. This responds to the following questions arising from the context:

- Is family merely a matter of nature or happenstance or is there a Christian vision of the purpose of family?
- How should family members relate to each other and what factors or features constitute sustainable family relationships?

In responding to these issues, a structural paradigm or perspective of family as the starting point for developing a family theology was avoided. Such a perspective is based on a family's configuration, content or form. Although one cannot ignore or avoid the issue of family structure, it is not the starting point for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the aim is to develop a theology around what could be identified as a contextual perspective of family. As such, informed by insights from the Cross Town case study as well as some aspects of the concept of functionalism previously discussed, a functional approach was taken. I have sought to discern what is the divine function for families. There is also the hope that such an approach is more likely to help address some of the central concerns which were seen in Cross Town for meaningful family relationships.

Secondly, when trying to identify a common core component of family life, a structural approach did not seem as a suitable starting point because family structure was prone to change and was not common for all families. Moreover, starting with the primacy of say marriage or procreation as a structural approach tends to or would be problematic because in an all-encompassing understanding of family, neither marriage nor children are givens. One of the few givens common to all families is relationality. So, if there is a core, it seems to me that the nature of relationship must be the core and this is the central paradigm for this family theology.

A third reason for avoiding a structural paradigm is the absence of any clear family structure outlined in scripture. It seems therefore that a theology built around a biblical understanding of familial relationships might be a worthwhile approach.

In advancing this perspective there is a decided shift from both the cultural family norm with sexual relations and reproduction at the centre, as well as from traditional Christian family theology with marriage at the centre. Accordingly, there is a commensurate shift from seeing the nature of sexual relations as the criteria for deciding whether a family is appropriate or not, to seeing the quality of relationships as the deciding criteria for family well-being. Moreover, there is a clear presupposition that family has purpose and is not merely a natural phenomenon that is coincidental to human existence.

Along these lines it is proposed that God has placed us in families for the purpose of relationship so that through our experiences of relationship, the image of God in us might be more fully formed and emancipation more complete. Family is made for the purpose of relationship and the quality of family life can be assessed by the quality of relationships experienced by its members.

It is in families also that we begin to develop attitudes to such things as authority and power, which influence our response to God's authority and power. Similarly, issues such as appropriate affection, affirmation and intimacy influence how a family cultivates love of self in each of its members. The experiences of trust, cooperation, conflict resolution and forgiveness prepare family members to love their neighbours.

> *The role of the family is not, in the first instance, to produce workers. Rather, the role of the family is to produce healthy, mature and creative human beings who have learned that, in a quite profound sense, our true work as human beings is to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbour as ourselves.*[81]

---

[81] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 79.

We are created to exist in community. The significance and priority of maintaining community are important to human existence. The centrality of relationality to family is borne out in nature, the witness of scripture and psychodynamic psychology.

As the writer of Romans suggests, it is possible to understand God by the observation of nature.[82] What we observe in nature is that human beings are conceived in a relationship. In addition, our initial physical formation takes place through the agency of another person - our mother - and our psychosocial and spiritual developments take place out of our interaction with others and this happens over a period of many years. The simple fact that human species require nine months of gestation within the womb of the mother or that they require such an extended period of interaction with other human beings to develop sufficient skills such as mobility and language to function on their own, could be considered to be consistent with God's purpose for the family to be a setting for relationships. What is more, it seems reasonable to suggest that God intended family life to provide a template for understanding other relationships since it is in families that our first relationships are formed.

The centrality of relationality also finds biblical basis in the creation story, which suggests, '…co-humanity is the original and therefore the quintessential aspect of personal and individual human existence.'[83]

> *The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him".... Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."*[84]

Additionally, Jesus' teaching about the supreme law of God '…to love God…and love your neighbour as yourself'[85] suggests the importance of relationship to human

---

[82] Rom 1: 19-20.

[83] R. Anderson and D. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), pp. 17-18.

[84] Gen 2:18-23 (NIV).

[85] Mark 12:30-31.

existence. If we consider the formation of God's image in us as synonymous with spiritual formation, then the formative role that family plays in our orientation to relationships is therefore closely related to its role in our spiritual formation.

> *Because spiritual formation is closely aligned with the task of becoming human and existing in the framework of human relations, the task of spiritual formation is lodged in the intentionality of community. This is most clearly focused in what we call family.*[86]

The centrality of relationality therefore has implication for the relationship between family life and spiritual development. 'The relationships that place demands upon our own life through daily and domestic proximity determine to a large extent our spiritual formation, either negatively or positively.'[87]

Turning to the psychodynamic theory of personality, the centrality of relationality to family life is supported by the object-relations theory, which, as we saw in an earlier discussion, suggests that relationships are the basic mechanism by which personality is formed.

Relationships are fundamental to family life but not all types of relationships are in the best interest of family well-being. Relationships may be considered to exist along a spectrum between ideal at one pole and dysfunctional at the other. The resources of the Christian faith offer a theological understanding of the kinds of relationships that are most likely to foster God's intention for family. This family theology offers a vision of God's ideals for relationships to strive for and to be fostered in our teaching and praxis. It is not possible to itemise in this study all the features of family relationships informed by the Christian faith but some broad principles can be identified. Two will be presented.

---

[86] R. Anderson, and D. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), p. 119.
[87] Ibid., p. 123.

A Christian Vision for Family Relations

The first broad principle is that family relationships that are ideal for family well-being emanate from the character of God. Family life, for example, should be built around relationships that are akin to God's covenantal arrangements with Israel, or the equality and cooperation evident in the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead.

A second principle is that family relationships should be such that they perpetuate a family. In the face of truncated experiences of some families in Cross Town this principle presents a significant challenge for families there. This principle stems from the perspective that God's relationship with humanity is perpetual. Moreover, since the formation of God's image is ongoing, the potential for a family to be an institution that fosters the formation of God's image in its members depends on it being stable or sustainable. A family should be able to sustain its connections with its members without fracture, fragmentation or disintegration over the changing stages of people's life cycles. It is participation in a family that is self-sustaining or perpetuating that conveys a sense of belonging to its members. Belonging in turn lays the foundation for personhood that is essential for an experience of fuller emancipation.

In order to be self-sustaining, family relationships must be able to withstand the vicissitudes of life that may lead to family fragmentation. In the contextual analysis, some of the challenges to family stability included gender conflicts, migration fuelled by economic hardships, uncertainty or denial of paternity and an absence of affection in family interactions. If families are to overcome these challenges, then qualities such as trust, forgiveness and reconciliation should be fostered within the family. Trust, for example, is cultivated by truth telling, reliability and regularity. When family members are unable to rely on each other, trust and ultimately stability of a family are compromised. This principle of perpetuity has implications for the care of children, the disabled and the elderly. Without a commitment to sustaining the family network, the care for vulnerable members becomes uncertain or a burden on public sector and private care agencies.

One of the issues regarding family relations surrounds the question which relationship is of greater priority. Some, such as Brunner, have lifted marriage as the primary focus for family life, while others, like Barth, have argued for parent-child relationship as the primary one in a family.[88] From a systems theory perspective, it might not always be helpful to lift up either relationship as the core of family. In the approach being taken here, family life is considered to be a more dynamic interaction between various relationships, each of which contributes to the whole. It is a balance between these relationships that determine the functionality of the family as a whole.

Relationality and Family Praxis

The relationality paradigm will no doubt have implications for family praxis. Three are considered here.

1. Relationality should not only be taught; the faith-community in its interaction with the wider community should live it out. The Church itself should be a family, which sees the community as part of that family. Many of the participants in the Cross Town project spoke of the need for the Church to relate with communities beyond the walls of the Church. The Church therefore will need to become more relational in its methodology.

2. Given the challenges to relationships found in inner-city communities, family praxis will need also to consider providing greater support to people in areas like relationship skills, and counselling as well as in conflict resolution.

3. Family praxis informed by a family theology must work with families to strength their resilience in the face of fragmentation. In the Caribbean, the extended family has in the past been one of the sources of family perpetuation, which provided some measure of certainty, care and stability. New ways need to be found to strengthen or create new forms of extended families to negotiate the contemporary challenges of family fragmentation. Also family mediation services will increasingly become important aspects of

---

[88] R. Anderson and D. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), p. 75.

family ministry that help to perpetuate the family network. In addition, churches will need to give more thought to how they become surrogate families when mediation is not possible.

Relationality therefore is a core paradigm that underpins this family theology. As a corollary to this relational focus, the theology being proposed in the remainder of this section is built around various relational aspects of family life, namely a theology of unions, a theology of sex and sexuality, and a theology of parenthood.

THEOLOGY OF UNIONS

In general, a theology of unions speaks to the following questions arising from the context:

- How can the resources of the Christian faith guide an understanding of relationships between partners in families?
- How might we, in light of the Christian faith, consider power and leadership dynamics between women and men in inner-city families today?
- What constitutes a union that is a basis for sustainable family life?

One of the primary relationships in a family is the union between partners. The Cross Town study suggested that the sustenance of relationships between partners poses significant challenges for many families there. As was discussed elsewhere in this study, these challenges are influenced by factors such as the changing nature of gender dynamics, the opportunistic character of relationships occasioned by economic need as well as the apparent cultural acceptance of infidelity.

Christian tradition has tended to develop a family theology on the basis of a theology of marriage. This, as was suggested, is the case with the implicit family theology emerging from the study of the context. In the Caribbean however, this is problematic because marriage is an ambiguous term. Some of the specialists interviewed alluded to this. Linton for example states that:

> *One of the key mistakes we must not make is to think that when we use the word marriage, that it has the meaning for those coming out of the historical values it had for the first world Christianised countries. It does not.*
> (See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with Faith Linton, Appendix VIII-B, pp. 409-410).

Caribbean people make certain socio-cultural associations with marriage, which have contributed to it being seen by inner-city residents as a status trapping rather than a necessity for family life. In addition, this is made more confusing by the intersection of social, religious and legal aspects of a marriage. Moreover, the presence of alternative conjugal unions has compounded the ambiguity. A family theology should, in some way, seek to respond to the ambiguities about marriage and the complexities caused by the range of conjugal unions present in the context. It might be helpful therefore to unpack the contextual meaning of marriage as well as what might truly distinguish one type of union from another.

The Meaning of "Marriage" in the Caribbean

Marriage in the Caribbean may be considered as having relational, economic, social, legal and religious components. Relationally, a marriage is considered to be an exclusive, permanent relationship between a man and a woman for companionship and mutual support. Among the higher social classes and those with religious commitments, it might be considered a prerequisite for having children but this is not necessarily so for most of the lower classes. With very little connection made therefore between marriage and childbearing, it is not unusual for persons to postpone marriage until middle age, after they have already had a child, after they have been together for some time or have been through a number of previous relationships which may have been of various types. As was previously mentioned, having a first child often creates the context for considering further commitment.[89] Sometimes however, marriage only comes after having their 'lot' of children or after partners have cohabited for an extended period and feel more certain of their commitment to each other.

---

[89] Chapter 1, Section 1.3 under the heading - Union Types and Household Classifications, p. 22.

Social and economic aspects are related and may be considered together. Socially, marriage is considered to be a sign of social status that confers respectability to the couple.[90]

> *Marriage for the Jamaican peasant, still involves a movement to middle class status in terms of values. It often involves owning a home and certain prestige goods, acquiring a new "taste" for things, belonging to a respectable church and assuming a life style which is often out of line with one's economic circumstances.*[91]

Despite the social acceptance of a couple's cohabiting or visiting union by the majority of their family and friends, marriage provides added acceptability. An elaborate wedding, to which many family and friends are invited, often signals this. As was discovered in the analysis of the context, this perception of status change is often associated with changing expectations for each partner. For example, both husbands and wives are expected to lessen social involvements with friends outside the home. In a similar vein, an interview with sociologist and family worker, Blossom White, provided a description of the sentiments about the change in status from a male partner of a couple who had lived together for twenty-five years and had five children together.

> *When I asked the man why he didn't want to get married ....he said, "miss a wife is a wife and a woman is woman. If I have a wife I have to provide certain things for her, different from a woman."*
>
> (See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with Blossom White, Appendix VIII-C, p. 419).

Generally therefore, there is an expectation of greater financial responsibility and control by the husband. This takes us to the economic aspects of marriage.

---

[90] See excerpt 6, community males 19-25, Appendix V, p. 372.

[91] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), p. 22.

The rise in social status associated with marriage is also related to economics, since a couple feel they are not ready for marriage until they have achieved some acceptable level of financial security. A couple ideally associate marriage with being able to own or rent their own home and with the man especially, earning a regular wage. The unfortunate reality is that preconditions for marriage such as the required commitment and the stability of regular employment can often constantly elude them.[92] There is the perception too that a marriage indicates financial independence and therefore leads to a severing of some economic support from the extended family network. Moreover, the wedding, which is a desirable event to commemorate a marriage, is very often a costly affair. Marriage for the inner-city couple can therefore seem like an expensive and an unnecessary luxury. The gains in respectability are traded, it seems, for personal freedom and economic expedience.

Marriage is recognised by the state as a legal contract that can only be dissolved by legal means. In addition to the other deterrents to marriage, the perceived difficulty and expense of legal dissolution of a marriage may be an added disincentive. A long history of alternative conjugal unions in the Caribbean particularly among the poorer classes has left some people doubting the necessity of the legal aspect of a marriage.

If a person does however consider marriage, they tend to be desirous of having some religious ritual as part of their wedding whether they are committed Christians or not. Moreover, most of the persons authorised by the state to marry couples are ministers of religion making marriage invariably linked to religion. The religious aspects of a marriage are not however limited to the wedding ritual. As was noted in the analysis of the context, marriage often receives the most serious contemplation when religious commitment becomes an issue for at least one of the partners. Many who are Christians consider their marriage as part of their faith commitment.

What we find therefore is that a wedding brings a couple into contact with the social, legal and religious aspects of a marriage simultaneously. In some cultures these aspects are more easily separated and may take place at different times and marked by different rituals. However this intersection of social, legal and religious interests

---

[92] Participants spoke of some residents in Cross Town who thought they did not meet the preconditions for marriage. See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading - Prevalent Family Forms and Why, p. 146.

in the Caribbean context makes it difficult to distinguish what may truly be considered a Christian view of marriage. How integral, for example, are the legal aspects to a Christian understanding of marriage? It will be important to be conscious not only about how marriage is understood contextually, but also about differences between various non-marital unions and between those unions and legal marriage.

Unions and Commitment

In spite of the trends towards more cohabitation unions in the United Kingdom, Morgan is quick to point out the difference that she sees between marriage and such unions.

> *Far from being a mirror-image of marriage, cohabitation turns out to be something fundamentally different. Firstly, it is very fragile. Cohabiting relationships are always more likely to fracture than marriage entered into at the same time, regardless of age and income.*[93]

The reluctance expressed by Doris' children to the idea of her marrying Tom even though they were happy for the couple to live together illustrates a similar distinction often made by people in Cross Town.[94] On the surface therefore what Morgan says might seem directly applicable to the Caribbean situation but it warrants a closer look. To begin with not all cohabiting unions are the same. Furthermore, a distinction is necessary between visiting unions and cohabiting unions in terms of their effects on family functioning. In the absence of detailed research on relationship outcomes and comparisons, it is difficult to argue this case conclusively. However, using anecdotal evidence from the study, a distinction between different types of cohabiting unions might be made and a cursory comparison between legal marriage and cohabiting unions can be done. These will serve to suggest what might be at the heart of the difference between unions.

Formerly, in the Caribbean, more cohabiting unions tended to be faithful lifelong unions and were therefore more akin to a lifelong legal marriage in terms of the quality of the relationships, stability and function.[95] However, in contemporary

---

[93] P. Morgan, *Marriage-Lite: The Rise of Cohabitation and its Consequences* (London: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2000), p. vii.

[94] Chapter 3, Section 3.4 - Case Family 1, pp. 177-178.

[95] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: Author, 1992).

Caribbean society cohabiting relationships are less long lasting. Commenting on this Hermione McKenzie in her interview, mentioned that, '...perhaps the faithful common-law union is almost a myth.' [96] With reference to research conducted by Roberts in Jamaica and Trinidad in the nineteen seventies, she went on to argue that people who commit themselves to a marriage are more likely to stay in it than people who opt for a cohabiting union.[97] Settling in a cohabiting union was done, she thought, because it could be easily dissolved. A cohabiting union therefore was seen as inherently unstable compared with a legal-marriage union. This view finds support in research done in the United Kingdom and is reflected in the work by Morgan, in which she notes, 'cohabitation is an inherently unstable state. Where it is not a step leading to marriage, it is not an alternative to marriage...'[98]

The exception Morgan makes is significant, for when considered with what has been said so far, it suggests that there are at least three types of cohabiting relationships. One that is a faithful union without legal legitimacy, another that is preparatory to legal marriage and a third that tends to be short-lived. Sometimes people in the first two types legalise their union after many years of being together. For some, especially of the second type, there might be an intention for permanence that might have been there prior to living together. The third type however is significantly different from the others with less of an intention for permanence. It could be this type of cohabitation that Morgan refers to when she says:

> *Cohabitants behave more like single people than married people in a number of ways, notably in their attitudes towards fidelity to their partners. Cohabitation is sometimes presented as setting women free from the shackles of patriarchy. In fact the women and their children are at greater risk of abuse than they would be in married relationships...*[99]

---

[96] See excerpt 3, from transcript of interview with Hermione McKenzie, Appendix VIII-C, p. 417.

[97] G. Roberts and S. Sinclair, *Women in Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction and Family*, The Caribbean: Historical and Cultural Perspectives, Hill, R. (Millwood New York: Kraus-Thomson Organisation Press, 1978).

[98] P. Morgan, *Marriage-Lite: The Rise of Cohabitation and its Consequences* (London: Institute For The Study of Civil Society, 2000), p. 24.

[99] Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

In the Caribbean, people make clear distinctions between different types of unions not just on the basis of socio-economic status but also on the basis of the perceived level of commitment each possesses. In the Cross Town study, female participants in particular consider the reluctance of men to marry someone with whom they have cohabited for some time as a lack of commitment. Similarly, the community men who said they postponed marriage because they were unable to guarantee fidelity to one woman give some credence to this view.[100]

Morgan's research with cohabitants in Britain lends some empirical basis for this also.[101] What seems evident from this cursory review is that the varying levels of commitment might be a key factor in understanding the qualitative difference between these unions and offers a clue as to how they might be understood theologically. This difficulty to commit in the Caribbean however cannot be separated from the dislocating effects of a slavery past and the debilitation of economic deprivation and therefore cannot be addressed simply by insisting that men be more committed. The spiritual and psychological scars of the past, particularly for Caribbean men, cannot be ignored. What is also evident is that simply starting with a theology of marriage is not sufficient for a contextual family theology.

A Christian Vision of Unions

In the approach to be taken, the broader concept of a theology of unions will be looked at. By theology of union, one is speaking of how the Christian faith understands various types of family unions and how the resources of the faith might provide a vision of unions, which is in keeping with God's intention for families. The assumption is that it is the quality of relationship in the union that is the basis for sustainable family life, rather than the presence of a legal marriage, with all its socio-cultural ramifications. In Cross Town the presence of different mainly unstable unions was one of the contributors to family instability. A theology of unions should offer the hope of partnership relationships that can be a basis of more sustainable families.

---

[100] See excerpt 5, community males 19-25, Appendix V, p. 371.

[101] P. Morgan, *Marriage-Lite: The Rise of Cohabitation and its Consequences* (London: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2000), p. 53.

In outlining this theology of union, it will be helpful to do two things. Firstly, to propose a classification of unions into covenant union, Christian covenant union, contractual union and progressing union. Secondly, to discuss some of the 'ideal' features of a union which makes for sustainable family life from a Christian perspective.

A covenant union may be considered as one based on a lifelong covenant relationship between partners, which manifests the biblical ideals for a union, but with neither partner having any particular faith commitment nor seeing any religious significance or obligation in their relationship.

A Christian covenant union could be seen as involving at least one person of Christian faith who considers his or her covenant union as a part of their God-given calling and who seeks God's blessing on his or her union and promises to apply biblical principles to his or her relationship in obedience to God.

A contractual union is considered as one involving a legal contract. It is possible therefore to make a distinction between a covenant relationship, which strives to meet biblical ideals for a union, and a contractual relationship that fulfil state requirements and provide legal protection for each party. Furthermore, a covenant union may exist independent of a contractual one.

Progressing unions may be seen as unions at various stages of development, which are neither contractual nor fully covenantal. It is possible to consider all relationships at some stage to be progressing unions having different degrees of the various components of a covenantal relationship.

What distinguishes a union as contractual is a legal document. Similarly, what marks a union as covenantal is first the mutual agreement and intent of the parties and secondly some acts of acknowledgement or rite of initiation which may or may not be of religious significance. In the case of the Christian covenant union, this act would include some overtly religious element. What then, might some of the features of an ideal union be? Such a union should be covenantal, freely chosen and built on gender equity and mutuality.

Features of a Covenant Union: Covenantal

All family relations should be covenantal. Nowhere is this more significant than in a union between partners. As a covenantal union there should be commitment expressed in responsibility and fidelity. Such commitment lays a base for stable and sustainable family life. Joseph exemplified this commitment when he chose to stay with his fiancée Mary, even after finding out she was carrying a child that was not his.[102] His commitment to her arguably stands out as a deciding ingredient in their union. It carries with it both a dimension of responsibility and of fidelity.

The importance of responsibility, as part of a covenant commitment, which is suggested by Joseph's relationship to Mary, is also evident in attitudes in different cultures. For example, in cultures for which arranged marriages are the norm, this commitment seems to be assumed as inherently present in partners who may be chosen for each other by their family. For Caribbean women, a man's incapacity to commit to a lifelong union is a mark of irresponsibility. If commitment expressed in responsibility is inadequate it is unlikely that the relationship will be sustained through the challenges of life. The family, as a whole, will be unstable and therefore limited in its potential to deliver fuller emancipation.

This covenant union should also be one of fidelity; that is, one with a dimension of exclusivity between partners. This has implications for the culturally accepted pattern of multiple relations, which in its present form negates fidelity. This covenant ideal challenges inner-city cultural norms and offers the hope of more stable and sustained family life that reflects the faithfulness of God and guards the well-being of family through its changing seasons. For the Caribbean, fidelity finds expression in monogamy and permanence.

In the Caribbean there is cultural tolerance but little social support for sub-families that result from multiple unions. Such relationships are usually clandestinely conducted. This undermines trust and increases the risk of family fragmentation and intra-family contention.[103] Likewise, multiple childbearing unions also diminish

---

[102] Matt 1:18-20.

[103] See excerpt 2, Case Family 2, Appendix V, p. 389.

'parental investment' because of the increased risk to paternal certainty and abdication of paternal responsibilities. [104] For the Caribbean context therefore, fidelity may need to be manifested in monogamous unions.

It is evident that monogamous and polygamous family unions are spoken of in the scripture. While there is no unambiguous injunction against polygamy, biblical warrant for monogamy is easier to discern. For example, in the creation accounts in Genesis, only Adam and Eve are created, so only a monogamous union is imaginable and the culminating expression of their union, 'they become one flesh' seems to speak of monogamy.[105] In the gospel accounts of Jesus' discourse about marriage and divorce, monogamy seems to be taken for granted.[106] Also, as noted in an earlier section, the epistles are explicit in their preference for church leaders to be 'husbands of one wife' even though the reasons for this preference are not obvious. What seems common to either marital system, as it was expressed in the biblical cultures, was the intention for perpetual obligation to family and community. In that sense therefore, both could be considered as expressions of fidelity. Each culture and context must choose what is appropriate to achieve sustainable family life.

Multiple relations as they occur in the Caribbean reflect the paradigm of reproduction and sex as the basis of family life. They represent a continuation of the relics of slavery and perpetuate socio-economic bondage. Conversely, monogamous unions reflect the paradigm of relationality and offer greater hope of reciprocal care, equality and mutuality between partners. In addition, it enhances trust and parental investment, which are ingredients for sustainable family life. On the basis of cultural, sociological and biblical grounds therefore, monogamous unions should be considered the preferred option in the Caribbean as an expression of fidelity.

A growing outlook of contemporary Western society is that a lifelong union is no longer possible. A theology of unions based on the character of God and God's

---

[104] See Browning et al in *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground* for a discussion of parental investment. It is a concept developed by biologist, Robert Trivers, which refers to the effort or investment which a parent places into the care and survival of one offspring which in turn limits what the parent is able to give to another offspring.

[105] Gen. 2:24.

[106] Matt 19: 1-10.

covenant relationship challenges this outlook by upholding the ideal of permanence. The ideals for human relationships however are always mediated by human frailty. This is true too of the ideal of permanence. It seems reasonable to expect therefore that not all couples will live out this ideal.

Some have argued that marriage should be considered indissoluble. Offering a Church of England interpretation of this view, former Sub-Dean of Westminster, A. E. Harvey notes:

> *In its most obvious sense it is plainly untrue. Marriages are dissolved every day...What the doctrine appears to mean, therefore is that marriage itself (especially when consummated) creates a relationship between a man and a woman which persists in some invisible way (like, say, the relationship between a brother and sister) even if they no longer live together and have each entered into a second marriage with another partner.*[107]

In spite of the obvious allowance for divorce in Jewish tradition and that of most of the major religions, Jesus' teaching in Matthew nineteen and its interpretation by Paul in I Corinthians seven are cited to support the indissolubility of marriage.[108] In an attempt to understand these teachings, one must give some consideration of the context in which these come.

> *Whatever its origin, if seen in broader cultural context, early Christian teachings against divorce would also have protected women from the Jewish man's unilateral right to dismiss his wife, and from the Roman man's tendency to use wife and relatives as pawns in the game of political and economic power.*[109]

As Harvey goes on to argue neither of these teachings necessarily regards marriage in principle as indissoluble.[110] The fact that they included an exception would

---

[107] A. Harvey, "Marriage, Sex and the Bible (I)," *Theology* XCVI, 773 (1993), p. 364.

[108] See Deuteronomy 24: 1-3 for an indication of Jewish divorce traditions.

[109] L. Cahill, *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*, New Studies In Christian Ethics, Gill, R. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 156.

[110] A. Harvey, "Marriage, Sex and the Bible (I)," *Theology* XCVI, 773 (1993), pp. 366-372.

suggest that in principle, marriage was dissolvable but under certain conditions. However, what seems evident was the seriousness with which Jesus considered the marriage covenant and the hope that every effort be made to preserve it. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that the exception Jesus holds of sexual unfaithfulness was not necessarily exhaustive but was representative of anything that had the potential to violate the covenant relationship between two people, sufficiently to render it irreparable. In the face of human frailty, the contemporary Church must discern what in our day constitutes a potentially irreparable breach of covenant for which dissolution might be appropriate.

Features of a Covenant Union: Freely Chosen

In the earlier part of this section, emphasis was placed on the importance of choice to a family theology informed by an emancipation ethic. This ethic finds expression in the theology of unions; for partners in an ideal union should be freely chosen. What might we learn from the biblical narrative about the choice of a partner? Three texts illustrate how this issue is dealt with in scripture - the account of the creation recorded in Genesis two, the story of Jacob and Rachel,[111] the story of how Abraham's servant acting on his instructions went in search of a wife for Isaac.[112] What we see regarding choice of partners in the scriptures is that at times the choice was made by the persons involved and at other times by their families. There might be a place therefore for honouring both the personal and family input in choosing a mate.

What the analysis of the context suggested was the tendency for mate selection to be without the active involvement and guidance of family and community institutions like church and school, and for it to be based either on apparently fickle considerations such as looks, or on economic expedience and opportunism. Extended family and community should have a stake in the processes involved in mate selection and union formation but not a controlling role. It should allow people 'to be,' regardless of the consequences, but participating as a supportive community in shaping their awareness in a way that helps them to make choices in the interest of a

---

[111] Gen 29: 15-30.

[112] Gen 24.

sustainable family life. The critical consciousness that leads to right choosing must appreciate the need to balance individual interest with that of the community.

In the Caribbean context also, factors such as economics and cultural attitudes which limit choosing to decisions purely on the basis of expedience or which eliminates one's potential to choose, must be confronted if more partners are to freely choose each other and form unions appropriate to family well-being.

Features of a Covenant Union: Gender Equality and Mutuality

The ideal union for sustainable family life should also be one of equality and mutuality. In the face of gender conflicts and marked inequalities and exploitation in the distribution of family responsibility, particularly domestic responsibilities between women and men in the Caribbean, the power dynamics between them require some attention in this theological conversation. Additionally, the reality of matrifocality on the one hand and the high incidences of father absence on the other, bring into question the viability and indeed the necessity of male headship for family well-being. Furthermore, consistent economic hardship has meant that Caribbean women have, for a long time, been a part of the workforce outside the home. The increasing pace of this trend means that the traditional model of family based on the man being the breadwinner and the woman being at home and responsible for the domestic domain is unrealistic and should give way to a model of greater partnership between women and men sharing 'breadwinning' and domestic responsibilities.

The ethos of female submission alluded to in the biblical narrative has often been problematic because of the proneness to be interpreted in hierarchical terms. In today's society, where the equality of women and men is more acknowledged, it seems that more harm is done to the cause of the gospel by preserving this ethos as part of a contemporary family theology. It is for these reasons why a theology of unions that emphasises the God-given equality between women and men, seems a more realistic model for contemporary Caribbean society.

Such a theology of unions is based on the acknowledgment that male and female together reflect the image of God.[113] It further affirms the equality between women and men when they were created.[114] It contends moreover that any allusions to women's subordination to men suggested in the fall narrative, properly belongs to the curse from which humankind has been redeemed by the work of Jesus.[115]

The hierarchical ethos of the household codes should be seen in the context of the patriarchal culture of the early Church. A contemporary theology might need to focus on the notion of mutual submission rather than the culture-laden idea of submission of women to men, which undermines the original picture of equality painted in the creation narratives. A family theology informed by a redemption focus should work for the restoration of God's original intention for gender equality. An emphasis on co-leadership and shared roles might also be a more emancipatory understanding of headship and gender roles in families. A theology of gender equality and mutuality therefore seems more in keeping with the spirit of the biblical narrative and the needs of family life in the contemporary Caribbean context.

Acknowledgement and Initiation of the Covenant

The covenant union between two partners ideally should be marked by an act of public acknowledgement and initiation. One of the drawbacks of unions common in Cross Town is that they have little public acknowledgement and can therefore lose the benefit of support from the social network. They are seen more as a private agreement and may lose some of their accountability to a wider social network.

Covenants initiated by God were normally marked by some ritual or act of initiation.[116] Moreover, some rituals often marked covenant making between persons.[117] By the traditional Christian understanding, a marriage was publicly acknowledged by a wedding ceremony and initiated by sexual intercourse. The question is, should sexual intercourse be considered the act of initiation for a

---

[113] Gen 1: 27.
[114] Gen 1: 27-28.
[115] Gen 3:16.
[116] Gen 17:11.
[117] Gen 21:22-32.

contemporary theology of unions? This will be explored when a theology of sex and sexuality is discussed, but here for the purpose of the present discussion, the appropriateness of ceremony and ritual to acknowledge a covenant union will be considered.

The recognition of a union between two people marks a significant moment not just for them but for their families and the wider community as well. Union formation therefore warrants the use of appropriate ritual and ceremony. Similarly, an act of initiation serves to symbolise the union between couples and helps to remind them of its significance and of their responsibility to each other and to the community for its preservation.

The significance of ritual in Caribbean culture means that it might be of value to consider appropriate rituals for different unions or those at significant stages of the relationship. This could be one way of garnering community affirmation and acknowledging a couple's commitment level. This could also recognise the progressing nature of relationships and help to mark milestones along the way towards increasing levels of commitment. Such rituals might offer the option of including religious elements where this is desirable. It is here that reconciliation of the cultural strands in the Caribbean, discussed as part of an emancipation ethic, finds application. Our African, Indian, European and indigenous Caribbean heritages can contribute to our quest for new and appropriate cultural rituals and ceremonies rather than the largely European paradigm which currently exists.

The theology of unions outlined here holds that the ideal union in a family should be one in which partners share a covenant union, one in which the commitment is marked by responsible, exclusive, monogamy and an intention of permanence. Moreover, a covenant union ideally is one that is freely chosen and one in which there is gender equality and mutuality. Such a union should be socially affirmed and acknowledged or initiated by appropriate ritual or covenant ceremony which may or may not be overtly religious. Also the covenant union would be strengthened by a legal contract. Such a theology must find clear expression in a family praxis for it should be supported with appropriate pastoral action

Unions and Family Praxis

1. Praxis that is in keeping with the theology of unions just discussed should begin with helping people to choose wisely. It should affirm people's freedom to choose by affirming one's choice of a mate. At the same time, it should empower by offering evidence-based information and educational opportunities that help persons to make informed and responsible choices. Not only does this involve empowerment for responsible choosing, it should also involve advocacy for living conditions that allow people to freely choose without the bondage of economic or other pressures.

2. Family praxis should work to strengthen the relationships between couples regardless of their union. Recognising the presence of different features of a covenant union in other unions, family praxis should affirm couples at whatever stage they are in their union. It should help them to reflect periodically on their relationship as well as provide enrichment and support to help preserve their union through the ongoing challenges of their relationship. Family praxis should also enhance and foster commitment characterised by responsibility and fidelity. This calls for praxis that honours a monogamous union, and helps couples avoid the threat of external ones. Nevertheless, praxis must face up to the apparent benefits people see in multiple unions but should work towards a reorientation of the cultural attitudes by affirming the benefits to family and society, of unions based on trust and fidelity.

3. Family praxis might need to consider developing appropriate liturgy and rituals that mark significant moments in a relationship such as an agreed stage of a visiting union, when a couple decides to cohabit and the time they wish to mark their intention to form a lifelong covenant union. Such ceremonies and celebrations can encourage the participation of the extended family and wider community, and in so doing help to alleviate the economic pressure a couple feels when they desire to celebrate their covenant union. This, in turn, might make public acknowledgement of a union easier and increase the chances of a sustainable, stable family unit.

4. Thought might be given as well to culturally appropriate liturgical forms which honour and symbolize some of the ideals of a covenant union. For example, the idea of gender equality in a union could be symbolized in a covenant union ceremony. Instead of the father giving the bride away, both parents should, and instead of just the bride being given, both bride and groom should be. Making the union contractual is an option that couples might be well advised to take for their own protection but the difference between a covenant and a contract should be maintained. Couples could then have the option of combining these aspects of a union in one ceremony or keeping them separate. Also, although there is religious or theological significance in families and unions, people should have the freedom to acknowledge this significance or not to do so in their union ceremonies.

5. Family praxis however must be responsive to the inevitable reality of human frailty. Therefore it should be about being available for redemptive care when persons choose wrongly, ill-advisedly or mistakenly. Family praxis should be ready in the event of a breakdown in the relationship, even where this might have started with the intention of permanence, to provide the necessary intervention to mediate any traumatic effects.

THEOLOGY OF SEX AND SEXUALITY

The theology of sex and sexuality responds to questions from the context such as:

- Should sexual unions and reproduction be the rubric around which a Christian understanding of family is constructed?
- What is appropriate sexual expression?

Some concerns discussed in the case study raised questions about appropriate sexual expression for family well-being. These included the high value of childbearing, the prevalence of teenage mothers and the practice of multiple sexual partners. A theology of sex and sexuality should offer to these situations a vision of meaningful sexual relations. But it should also address the Church's traditional theology of sex and sexuality that is ambivalent about sex and that generally over-emphasises the sinfulness of any sexual relationship outside of a legal marriage. It is this approach

which poses most hindrance to a radical inclusivism in the family ministry of the Church and which needs to be reviewed in the interest of the gospel. The approach taken here offers the hope of a family praxis that is more inclusive and compassionate and more in the interest of the gospel today.

The theology of sex and sexuality, being outlined, flows out of God's intentionality on the one hand, and humanity's free will and choice on the other. God has given us the gift of sex for a purpose as well as the potential to choose how and when we exercise that gift. The theological argument therefore revolves around God's purpose for sex and humankind's potential to exercise responsible choosing.

Purposes of Sex

Humankind have been created as sexual beings, 'male and female created he them'. In addition, our physical and psychological make-up includes organs, natural instincts and potentialities for sexual interaction. Therefore I contend that God has given us sex and sexuality. Various terms have been used interchangeably in reference to a sexual relationship. Among these are 'sexual intercourse', 'lovemaking' and 'sexual intimacy'. The preferred term to be used here is sexual intimacy. This conveys the naturalness, spontaneity, depth and uniqueness, which may be associated with a sexual union. It is sex as an intimate encounter - a knowing - that allows it to achieve its God-given purpose. Further, God has given us sex for three main reasons, namely, mutual pleasure, relational bonding and procreation. These are considered here without any order or scale of priority.

Sex is intended for pleasure. The fact that we come 'built' with this potential in our natural state suggests that this is part of the intention of the Creator. One can find biblical precedence for this pleasure perspective in the Song of Songs. Here the writer captures the celebration of physical attraction and desire shared between two lovers. Although the precise nature of their relationship is not explicit, what seems evident is their affirmation of the pleasure they experience and long for with each other as this excerpt illustrates.

How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride!

How much more pleasing is your love than wine,

And the fragrance of your perfume than any spice!

Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride;

Milk and honey are under your tongue.[118]

Another purpose is that sex is intended for bonding between the persons who share in sexual intimacy. In a covenant union, sexual intimacy becomes the physical expression of the covenant to which they have given their mutual consent. Sexual intimacy involves a deep emotional investment which, when combined with the pleasure and mutual satisfaction possible in a sexual encounter, can result in a strengthening of the affections and bond between two people.

Different strands of Christian theology have consistently made a connection between sexual union and the 'one flesh' passage in Genesis 2:24.[119] Both Jesus and Paul made reference to this text in their teachings about marriage.[120] For Paul, this connection seems more explicit but it is possible that there is a deeper intent in Jesus' reference. In either case, it seems probably that there are ramifications for this phrase that go beyond genital intercourse, for it is on this basis that Jesus seems to suggest that marriage is indissoluble and Paul argues for some kind of spiritual union between two persons who share in a sexual relationship. It seems reasonable to suggest therefore that sexual intimacy is a physical manifestation as well as a means to a deeper bond between two people.

There is a striking resemblance therefore between sexual intimacy in a covenant union and baptism in a faith commitment to Christ. As baptism is a sign of initiation into the Christian community, so sexual intimacy can be a sign of initiation into a covenant union. As baptism is an outward sign of an inner change, so sexual intimacy can be an outward sign of the inner intention for permanence. Both believers' baptism and paedo-baptist perspectives offer helpful insights to this

---

[118] Song of Songs 4:10-11 (NIV).

[119] See for example Jesus' discourse about marriage and divorce in Matt 19:5.

[120] Matt 19:4-6; I Corinthians 6:16.

analogy. As believer's baptism emphasises, baptism has no efficacy without the individual's commitment to a new life in Christ. So too, sexual intimacy on its own cannot be the mark of a covenant union. If a union is covenantal then mutual consent to their intent to a lifelong union is the real mark of the union. By the same token, sexual involvement cannot be taken as a sufficient condition to designate a covenant union. On the basis of this analogy, sexual intimacy belongs in a union in which a covenant has already been established by mutual consent.

Additionally, in the same way that infant baptism precedes commitment but harbours the hope of later confirmation of it, at minimum a union should at least harbour the hope of a covenant commitment before sexual intimacy should be considered appropriate. This departs from the other perspectives which see sexual intimacy as the seal of a covenant union. It is this latter view that is behind the legal requirement for sexual union to consummate a marriage. In my view this approach gives too central a location to sexual union and fails to give regard to the quality of the relationship or the mutually agreed covenant between the parties which should be the real basis for a sexual union.

Furthermore, sex is intended for procreation. It is clear from the injunction, 'be fruitful and multiply' found in the creation narratives, that God intended human beings to reproduce.[121] It stands to reason therefore that if God has made sex the means by which reproduction takes place, that sex for procreation was a part of God's intention. What is more, throughout the scriptures, children are considered a blessing and gift from the Lord and barrenness a curse.[122]

As was seen elsewhere in this study, in Caribbean culture childbearing is highly valued and conveys worth and acceptance to parents. However, the cultural centrality of sexual intercourse and reproduction are brought into question by this theology of sex and sexuality. So too is the pastoral policy that determines the morality of a sexual union on the basis of the legal status of a relationship with little regard to the quality of the relationship.

---

[121] Gen 1:22.

[122] Psalm 127:3.

In summary then, God gives sex and sexuality for pleasure, bonding and procreation. One of the questions that naturally arise might be, is either of these purposes on its own, a sufficient condition for sharing a sexual relationship? Alternatively, when is it appropriate for two people to share in a sexual union? This leads us to the issue of responsible choosing.

Responsible Choosing

Another main basis of the theology of sex and sexuality being advanced here is humanity's free will and choice. The presuppositions here are that God has given us the freedom to choose how we will exercise the gift of our sexuality and that God expects us to choose responsibly. Responsible choosing is that which is in accordance with the threefold purposes outlined above. Moreover, a sexual relationship has the potential to be most fulfilling and enhancing to family well-being when these purposes are held together as a whole. Any given sexual encounter might be more focused on one or other of the three purposes but should give consideration to the others. For example, even when sexual intimacy is intended primarily for pleasure, a couple have to consider that any sexual encounter even with contraceptive use could lead to procreation as well as intensify the bonds between lovers. Similarly, pleasure might be increased where the bond between two people is not compromised, where the possibility of a pregnancy is welcomed or appropriate steps taken to minimise it until it is desirable. The purposes of sex therefore complement each other and might benefit from being considered together.

A theology of sex and sexuality however must be consciously aware of the non-ideal reality in which we live, which makes responsible sexual choosing a complex matter. A decision to share in a sexual relationship is not just mediated by the isolated consideration of what is pleasurable or not, or what is right or wrong, but by other factors which are sometimes deeply embedded in the person's subconscious, such as their desire for affection that they lacked in their childhood or notions of power or issues of honour, desire for peer acceptance and fear of rejection. Also such decisions are often made out of the desperation brought about by their situation of material poverty.

The fallenness of human existence means that every decision is, in some way, mediated by the effects of living in a fallen world. It is possible therefore to speak of some negative attitudes that distort the God-given purposes of sex as part of the fabric of structural sin. In discussing this issue, Adrian Thatcher makes the point that:

> *When sin is considered to be a social or structural condition, it is a socio-cultural state in which one cannot fail to participate. Men may find themselves caught up in attitudes which demean women at work, in the street, at home, in the media and in bed. But men have not been taught to question the injustice of these attitudes.... taking them as givens (as well as advantages).*[123]

Attitudes to multiple simultaneous partners as well as the opportunist motivations for sexual relations and procreation, which emerged in the analysis of the context, may be considered manifestations of structural sin that can lead to inappropriate choices.

The complexity of sexual decision-making means that there is the likelihood that people will make inappropriate sexual choices. To uncritically say that one who has a sexual relationship outside of marriage is evil and sinful may only compound their state as victims of corporate evil. The considerations for the conditions for the exercise of one's sexuality should therefore be held in tension with those factors, which contribute to inappropriate use or even abuse of the gift. It will be helpful to explore how the resources of the Christian faith might inform our understanding of conditions ideal for the exercise of one's sexuality. Three such considerations will be discussed and all stem from the threefold purposes of sex.

The first consideration is commitment. Sexual intimacy that maximises the potential for pleasure, bonding and procreation takes place in a context of commitment. Ideally, this should be a covenant union in which trust is maximised, openness and uninhibited pleasure most attainable, conjugal bonding desirable and the readiness to bear the shared responsibilities of parenthood most likely. What has been a source of considerable controversy has been the tendency for the Church in its pastoral practice to see a ceremony celebrating a union and a legal contract as the marks of this

---

[123] A. Thatcher, *Liberating Sex: A Christian Sexual Theology* (London: SPCK, 1993), p. 74.

commitment. What is being proposed is that the morality and appropriateness of a couple's sexual relationship be determined by their expressed commitment to each other and not just on the basis of a ceremony or contract. Moreover, the difficulties of commitment should not be taken lightly. The psycho-cultural factors particularly for men, associated with a slavery history, the socio-economic realities as well as the long history of alternative non-legal unions in the Caribbean are arguably tangible impediments to commitment. Added to this are the association of status and economic trappings often cited for the postponement of a marriage. Against this background, it should be recognised that commitment might need to be treated as a process that requires careful nurture. Moreover, a relationship that demonstrates reasonable intent for a covenant union should be considered as appropriate for the sharing of sexual intimacy.

The second consideration is fidelity, which speaks of the faithfulness between partners as well as the uniqueness and exclusivity of their sexual union. A uniqueness that Paul characterises as a spiritual bond. Fidelity enhances the possibility of sustainable family life since sexual union becomes reserved for one who is a potential co-parent. In addition, it ensures paternal certainty and in this way heightens the possibility of paternal investment. Fidelity also minimises a preoccupation with pleasure as the single purpose for sexual relationships, which multiple, simultaneous or consecutive unions might foster. Fidelity therefore keeps the threefold purposes of sex together.

In the culture of the Bible this fidelity was extended to premarital relationships.[124] It is evident that the possibility that Mary might have violated her virginity was the reason for Joseph to consider annulling their engagement.[125] What emerges from the readings of the laws about sexual relations in the Old Testament is the obvious patriarchal bias with which fidelity was discussed. The premarital chastity required of women does not seem to apply to men and adultery is spoken of as a violation of a man against another's property. Also in a marriage agreement responsibility for a woman seemed to be transferred from a father to a husband. What is also known about that period is that the importance of lineage meant that paternal certainty was

---

[124] See for example Deut 22:13-21.

[125] Matt 1:18-19.

important and for this reason, violation of female chastity by anyone other than her husband was a source of much disgrace.[126] In light of the prevalence of premarital sexual relations in the inner-city context reflected in the findings of this study, the question of the place of premarital chastity seems pertinent.

One might rightly ask, does a less patriarchal orientation that no longer sees women as men's property remove the requirement for premarital abstinence between two people who are in a committed loving relationship? Moreover, is there any virtue in premarital chastity in itself? In response to these questions what is said in the *Church of Scotland's 1994 Report on the Theology of Marriage* is instructive.

> *Chastity exists within relationships, not only as a negative value of abstinence but as a deep and inherently affirmative moral value, involving integrity, loyalty, fidelity and purity of heart and body together. As such, it is invariably violated by casual, promiscuous or exploitative sex.*[127]

There might therefore still be value as part of one's fidelity to one's future covenant partner to choose to reserve the exercise of one's sexual gift until it properly symbolises the mutual consent to a covenant relationship. Such a symbol is most graphic after the covenant union has been celebrated and socially acknowledged. In this regard, common African custom that considers female virginity to be valuable can be extended to men as well and held as a possible model of fidelity. The drawback here however is the possibility of again making sex the criterion for assessing the morality of a union.

But what of other sexual relations outside of a covenant union or one that is progressing towards this? To the extent that such relationships might be 'casual, promiscuous or exploitative,' a sexual union seems an inappropriate expression of intimacy considering the threefold purposes of sex. But is there something fundamentally wrong about the act itself as Paul's argument in 1Corinthians 6:12-20 might lead us to think. In what way is one united with another when they share

---

[126] Deut 22:20-21.

[127] Church of Scotland, Panel of Doctrine, *Report on the Theology of Marriage*, (Edinburgh, Scotland, The Church of Scotland, 1994), p. 276.

sexually? Is it spiritual, emotional, sacramental or a purely symbolic reference? Also in what way is the body defiled by fornication (sexual immorality)? Is it the act itself or the conditions surrounding the act or the person with whom the act is committed? Is the defilement physical, spiritual, emotional or again purely symbolic?

It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a full response to these issues but Harvey in discussing this matter offers some helpful insights when he notes:

> *Certainly there is nothing which can be appealed to in support of any kind of permissiveness or promiscuity. But this is not what the majority of young people today are asking for. ...What they do demand is the freedom to give physical expression to their love of a sexual partner to whom they feel committed and with whom they may form a lasting relationship that ultimately issues in marriage.*[128]

Rather than regarding every exercise of one's sexuality outside of marriage as sinful, it might be more helpful to recognise that God has given us the freedom to choose how we exercise this gift even if this falls short of the post-ceremonial covenant union ideal. Moreover, what might be sinful about a sexual encounter is not the act itself, nor merely having sex outside of a legal marriage union, but the attendant factors such as the presence of exploitation.

A third consideration is mutuality or reciprocity, that is, mutual consent and equal concern for each other's needs. It implies that intimacy is a two-way flow in which the responsibilities for its initiation, enactment and possible procreative consequences are shared. Paul gives some indication of this reciprocity when he says:

> *The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.*[129]

---

[128] A. Harvey, "Marriage, Sex and the Bible (II)," *Theology* XCVI, 774 (1993), p. 463.

[129] I Corinthians 7:3-4 (NIV).

An ethos of 'family by choice' is more possible in a context of mutuality where exploitation is not likely to be present and where a couple can decide together when they are ready for children. This, as we have seen, is important to overcome the prevalence of children by happenstance and the attendant consequences of children feeling they are mistakes. Moreover, mutuality in a sexual union in which both give and receive and each is mindful of the other's needs and desires, increases the likelihood of the experience being pleasurable and fulfilling for both persons. Mutuality in sexual intimacy also reinforces the equality between partners and the worth and value with which each is regarded. This in turn strengthens the bonds between lovers. Mutuality therefore preserves the wholeness of the threefold purposes of sexual intimacy.

Sex and Sexuality and Family Praxis

It will be helpful here to identify four of the practical implications of the theology of sex and sexuality being advanced.

1. Family praxis should accept that people have the freedom to choose how they will exercise the gift of their sexuality. As a consequence, the language of 'sin and judgement' used for one who has not adhered to the Christian ideal is unhelpful.

> *We believe for example that the phrase 'living in sin' should be mentally and morally abandoned: first, because it seems to apply to a select group a phrase which characterises aspects of our shared human life and involves us all; secondly, because it refers specifically to the supposed illicitness of sexual intercourse in an non-marital context, but ignores the 'living in sin' which characterises relationships of marital backbiting, mutual emotional neglect, possessiveness etc.*[130]

Similarly, attempts to force people to fit into the legal marriage mould are equally unhelpful. The failure of a mass marriage movement in the immediate

---

[130] D. Browning, "Mapping the Terrain of Pastoral Theology: Towards a Practical Theology of Care," *Pastoral Psychology* 36, 1 (1987), p. 278.

post-emancipation period and again in the 1940s was a reflection of this.[131] These approaches have failed to change the trends in popular culture towards non-legal unions, and have resulted instead in stigmatisation and exclusion, which are contradictions to the cause of the gospel. The 'freedom ethic' being advocated here may be faced with the charges of encouraging wantonness in sexual matters and of bringing the gospel into disrepute. In defence, my appeal is to a gospel ethic that acknowledges the need sometimes to break with the status quo so that an exclusionary and judgemental interpretation of family praxis will give way to one that is redemptive, inclusive and one that opens the gospel message and the resources of the faith-community to those who hitherto have felt excluded and unworthy.

2. The focus of family praxis should not be on exclusion on the basis of sexual involvement but encouragement towards more responsible and fulfilling sexual expression in the context of a relationship of love and commitment. As Cahill suggests, 'a Christian sexual ethic does not function first or most strongly to "mark off" and condemn, but rather to inspire and encourage the disciple to do good.'[132] This involves doing more to teach the meaning and purpose of sexual intimacy and the advantages of sexual fidelity. Yet this must be done in the context of the reality of infidelity and a culture that project multiple partnerships as advantageous. While family praxis should challenge the structural sin in aspects of the culture, it should also meet with understanding and compassion its prevailing power over people and their susceptibility to its lure.

3. Another implication is that cohabiting couples or persons engaged in sexual relationships prior to marriage should not be assessed for membership and baptism on the basis of their sexual relationship but on the basis of their faith commitment. Moreover, each couple should be supported in assessing where they are in their commitment and on that basis determine the existence or potential for a covenant union upon which a couple can make an informed decision about their future together. Some churches, in their present pastoral

---

[131] V. Panton, *The Church and Common Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1992), pp. 19-22.

[132] L. Cahill , *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics, Gill, R. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 155.

response to common-law couples, have assumed that conversion means instant purity and holiness that should be accompanied by an instant change in lifestyle and behaviour. In doing so, it has overlooked the reality that spiritual maturity is a journey. If this is so, then people should be given the space under the direction of the Holy Spirit and through discipleship and spiritual nurture to come to an awareness of the ethical demands of the Christian life and make lifestyle choices accordingly.

Lifestyle choices are often complex issues which can involve inner conflict between one's values. Not to acknowledge this complexity is to deny the frailty and inner contradictions of human nature evident in Paul's epistle to the Romans.[133] The implication of this therefore is that persons in non-marital relationships should not be forced to abandon or legalize that relationship as some indication of their new found faith. Neither should churches and society impose lifestyle changes upon them. Instead persons should be accepted as members on their profession of faith and supported in the bid to make choices that are consistent with that faith and its values.

4. Family praxis calls for a redemptive perspective on people's sexual choices. One that does not condemn or judge them when those choices are inappropriate but is willing to help them come to terms with, cope with and rise above any negative consequences. This in the hope that they might not repeat the same mistake and that like Jesus, we might say, through our acts of love and support, 'go and sin no more.'

---

[133] Rom 7:14-25.

THEOLOGY OF PARENTHOOD

A theology of parenthood responds to the questions from the context related to parenting such as:

- What is the place of children in a family and what is the task of parenthood given the harsh realities of inner-city life?
- How might families, communities and the wider society work collaboratively to promote and sustain more stable families?

Issues of parenting were also significant in the Cross Town case study. Among these were concerns about appropriate parenting skills, father absence and the decline in community parenting. There seemed an obvious need for support in this area. A theology of parenthood must propose how the resources of the Christian faith might offer hope for more effective parenting for family well-being.

What is being argued is that parenthood derives from the doctrine of God in two senses. First it derives from God's intentionality, that is, God intended that human beings be parented and so there is a God-given purpose for parenting. Secondly, parenthood derives from God's covenant relationship with Israel.

Parenthood and God's Intentionality

God's intentionality for parenthood is graphically illustrated by the incarnation. God, in taking the form of human flesh, conceivably could have used other means to enter into human existence but as part of God's total identification and enfleshment of humanity, human parents were deliberately chosen to nurture the incarnate Son of God.[134] In doing so, God arguably endorsed parenthood as the way for true human nurture.

Additionally, God's purpose for parenting stems from the relationality paradigm discussed earlier. 'The foundation for a theology of parent-child interaction,' notes Cameron Lee, 'is a theological anthropology that recognises the importance of

[134] Matt 1:18, Luke 1: 26-27.

relatedness.'[135] The interaction between parents and children is fundamental to fulfilling God's purpose for families, of forming the Imago Dei in their members through relationships.

> *The child either does or doesn't "learn" to know God, to become fully human, to be differentiated as male or female. For every person someone or something stands in the parenting role and begins the re-creation of the Imago Dei. Unfortunately, that process fails miserably for many. For others it works relatively well... the grace of God is either facilitated or frustrated by the parenting process...*[136]

Such a proposition finds support in the object-relations theory discussed earlier.[137]

Ideally God's intentionality should be reflected in the parents' intentionality. Parenting should be an intentional undertaking. In this regard, an ethic of 'family by choice' should inform the parenting process. Parenting should consider right timing based on readiness physically, emotionally and materially. Childbearing moreover cannot simply be the result of selfish or self-centred motives.

> *The fathers and mothers most effective at nurturing are those whose children are not conceived in order to meet personal needs.*[138]

Such a motivation could lead to short-term commitment, which falls short of the covenant ideal needed for sustained family life. Doris, in the first case family illustrated the possible presence of this kind of motivation for some in Cross Town.

---

[135] C. Lee, "Toward an Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), p. 298.

[136] R. Anderson and D. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), p. 78.

[137] C. Lee, "Toward an Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), p. 298.

[138] H Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 24.

> *"The way my mother was treating me, I said I wanted somebody to love me. I wanted to love and for someone to love me back and even though I tried getting it from the guy I was talking to, I never got it."*
>
> (See excerpt 3, from transcript of interview with Doris and Tom, Appendix V, p. 387).

Doris' desire for a child was obviously influenced by her own need for affection. Such motivations can have little more than a short-lived commitment. Similarly, the cultural motivations for having children merely as a showpiece of male virility or female fertility might undermine long-term commitment and therefore fall short of the covenant ideal. Happily Doris was demonstrating a strong attachment and deep commitment to her children suggesting that initial motivation might be more complex than a single desire, even if it is self-centred. What this might also suggest is that there is hope even when initial motives for having a child seem inadequate and that other motives, which are more in keeping with intentionality, may emerge at a later stage. Additionally, as some of the male participants suggested, an increased sense of responsibility often accompanied the birth of a child. Like Tom, in the first case study, this was sustained and motivated him to search for employment. For other men it leads to greater commitment to a partner or regular financial contribution for child care. For too many men however, this sense is short-lived and fails to be matched with suitable action. Family praxis in the face of inappropriate motives for childbearing, unplanned pregnancies and a fragile sense of paternal responsibility should therefore seek to identify and foster the latent possibilities for more intentional motivations to be acted upon. In this way family praxis redeems family potential.

One of the common understandings participants had about a family was that it affected a person's life outcome.[139] Intentional parenting should therefore be seen with a futuristic perspective with implications not just for the parents but also for the child and the wider community. This futuristic perspective lives out the intention of God for the continuation and sustenance of human species.

---

[139] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading - Summary of Participants' Perception of a Family, p. 139.

Parenthood and God's Covenant Relationship

The theology of parenthood being developed not only derives from God's intentionality, but also from God's relationship with Israel. Throughout the scriptures, a parent-child metaphor is commonly used to describe the relationship between God and Israel or the Church.[140] This may be considered as two sides of a coin - the parent side and the child side. What is common to both God's covenant relationship with Israel and the parent-child dyad is a commitment, which Lewis Smedes characterises as unilateral and unconditional to which may be added life-long.[141] Parenthood is unconditional since 'the intention to be parent to a child is without conditions' and is unilateral says Smedes because:

> *A parent's commitment to a child gives the child no choice but to be committed too. In making the commitment, the parent exercises a God-like determination over the child's future. The parents usually determine the genetic, and always determine the psychological, moral, religious, and cultural environment of the child.*[142]

On one side of the coin therefore, parents may be considered as God's representatives or images that become sources of a child's awareness of the divine. Ideally a parent will reflect attributes of God not just in their commitment but also in their demonstration of love, authority, discipline and justice. It is here that parents can play a significant role in emancipating their children from mental and emotional slavery, feelings of inferiority and under-achievement. Parents can do this by communicating love, acceptance and affirmation.

In the Caribbean context, the high occurrence of father absence has meant that many families have adapted to living without the active input of a father. Most persons in

---

[140] Some of the passages referring to Israel or the Church as "children of God" are Job 21: 19, Matt 5:9, Luke 20:36, Rom 8:16.
Some of the passages referring to God as "father" are John 6:27; Gal 1:3; 1Pet 1:2 and as a "mother" Isaiah 66:13.

[141] L. Smedes, "The Family Commitment," Chap. in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ,* p. 248.

[142] L. Smedes, "The Family Commitment," Chap. in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ* p. 248.

the case study had an experience of a mother that they could relate to but much fewer had a consistent experience of a father. There is therefore the possibility that the place and value of fatherhood can be downplayed if not lost. What the Christian faith offers in response to this is a vision of the value for both parents. Motherhood and fatherhood are reflections of God's maternal and paternal attributes. Although they complement each other, they are not the same; neither can one adequately replace the other. Motherhood and fatherhood however, in specific terms and roles, are not universal but culturally defined. It is important to bear all this in mind for the Caribbean particularly since parents may not necessarily live in the same household. The notion of a life-long commitment of parents to a child should find expression even when they live in different households

An equally significant potential loss is the meaning of the motif 'God the Father.' Faith Linton, in her interview, offered some anecdotal evidence of this when she said:

> *I have actually talked to people, one young girl stood up in a session I was doing and she said, "I am a Christian but I cannot call God Father." The metaphor has been totally destroyed in her life so the meaning of father has been distorted.*
>
> (See excerpt 3, from transcript of interview with Faith Linton, Appendix VIII-B, p. 411).

'God the father' can sometimes have little resonance for someone who has no positive experience of an earthly father. Indeed a greater acknowledgment of the maternal attributes of God might be more contextually potent for people's understanding of God. What should be resisted however is the cultural tendency to exclude father from the family equation and instead to affirm the role of both parents even when they live apart. The fatherly attributes of God provide a Christian vision of an earthly father to inspire more effective fathering in a context where it is lacking.

The other side of the relational coin in a parent-child dyad is that of the child. In response to God's covenant with Israel they were expected to be obedient to God. Likewise children have a responsibility to obey their parents. The fifth commandment captures this mandate when it says, 'Honour your father and your

mother'[143] and to which the writer of Ephesians adds, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.'[144] What is worth emphasising is that parenthood is not a one way relationship but 'denotes one in which, if it goes well, parents and child develop and grow together, as each responds to the other's humanness.'[145]

The indication from the analysis of the context was that some children were born before their parents had established a long-term relationship. Marie for example became pregnant with her first child within the first few months of a relationship.[146] One of the issues that seem pertinent to consider therefore as part of the discussion of a theology of parenthood is, how family life may be affected by the order of family formation.

Parenthood and Family Formation

How might a Christian vision of families respond to the cultural values, seen in Cross Town, for family formation to involve childbearing and then committed partnership? Two relevant extensions of this theology of parenthood might speak to this. The first is that parenthood takes place as a partnership and the second is that the parent-parent relationship should be prior to a parent-child bond but not superior to it.

God has made reproduction, when undertaken by natural means, to involve a woman and a man. This suggests God's intention for partnership in the parenting process. This seems the logical conclusion also from what has been said about the difference between fatherhood and motherhood. Arguably, each reflects a different aspect of God's total image. Together they reflect, more fully, the image of God. It is on this basis that one could argue for parenthood as a partnership. Parents who understand this recognise the importance of supporting each other in life generally but specifically in various aspects of domestic and family life. The problem in the Caribbean and elsewhere is that this ideal of partnership seems under threat as father

---

[143] Exodus 20:12.

[144] Ephesians 6:1.

[145] C. Lee, "Toward an Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), p. 297.

[146] See excerpt 3, from transcript of interview with case family 2, Appendix V, p. 390.

absence becomes more prevalent and mothers become more adapted to bearing the brunt of the parenting.

In seeking to understand similar trends elsewhere, some have pointed to what has been described as a male problematic.[147] Browning defines this as 'the primordial male tendency to procreate but not care for offspring or mate.'[148] He remarks, with chilling resonance for the Caribbean context, that 'our analysis of contemporary family trends reveal this male problematic to be one of the most pressing national and international family trends of our time.'[149] Browning - influenced by evolutionary psychology- sees this as a regression in the evolutionary process of human development which had moved towards intact family units partly to ensure paternal certainty but also to maximise mutual support between co-parents and thereby increase the viability of the species. This is in contrast to most other mammals. At the same time, there is also a female problematic, which he defines as 'the tendency of females under some conditions to suppress their own needs and raise children without paternal participation, sometimes under great stress and at great cost.'[150]

Browning's analysis throws light on the situation in the Caribbean. It is possible to see the cleavage that exists between the roles of parent and spouse (father-husband or mother-wife) as a reflection of the male and female problematic. It is possible too that the stresses of the experiences of slavery and consistent economic hardship have contributed to the regression to these primordial fragmentary tendencies. A theology of parenthood should therefore offer a vision of hope that transcends this detachment tendency especially on the part of fathers. It should liberate the family from ambivalent paternal investment and its possible effects. Such a hope may be found when partner and parent roles are seen as a combined package. In the Jamaican setting therefore, one should not just perceive oneself as a 'baby-father' or 'baby-mother' but also as a partner to the one who mothers or fathers the child.

---

[147] For a fuller discussion see Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground.*
[148] Ibid., p. 22.
[149] Ibid., p. 22.
[150] Ibid., p.106.

The evidence in the Cross Town case study seems to support the notion that partnership expressed in a committed union increases the likelihood of a more stable family. This was suggested by the direct relationship between marriage and the presence of both biological parents as well as reduction in the number of sub-families.[151] This partnership perspective confronts the trend, witnessed in Cross Town, towards stronger mother-child bonds than those between partners.[152] In spite of this, there was a common consensus that two parents were better than one.[153] The challenge seems to be to bridge the gap between the perceived ideal and the lived reality.

Not only is parenting a partnership but the parent-parent relationship should be prior to the parent-child relationship. Ideally a union should precede childbearing. Again the creation story offers some biblical precedence. It seems obvious enough but worth emphasising that the man and the woman had to become acquainted with each other before they could procreate. It is out of this partnership that a strong base can be laid for childbearing and bringing up of children.

> *Currently there is much emphasis on the adult/child bond, with the belief that this can be maintained and improved independently, despite the lack of the adult/adult bond. However, the first is dependent upon the second, so that when the parent/parent bond is good, so too is the child/parent bond...When the adult/adult bond is unreliable, unsatisfactory, or broken, this has adverse effects on the parent/child bond.*[154]

It is conceivable that the trend of parenting before or without a covenant union increases the likelihood of male and female problematic and may continue to yield a less viable quality of family life than it promises. What is also conceivable, based on the views of men in the study, is that sometimes the presence of a child can strengthen the commitment between the parents. Although the parent-parent bond

---

[151] See Chapter 3 Section 3.2 , under the heading - Experiences of Family, p. 125.

[152] See Chapter 3 Section 3.3 under the heading - Experiences of Family, p. 127.

[153] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading - Opinions about the Different Family Forms, p. 146.

[154] P. Morgan, *Marriage-Lite: The Rise of Cohabitation and its Consequences* (London: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2000), p. 77.

should be prior to the parent-child bond from a system's theory perspective, it is not superior to it for they contribute to the vitality of each other.

In summary then, parenting should be a partnership involving both mother and father and their union should precede procreation. But what happens in the case of a single parent, where union has broken down or has not outlasted the birth of a child or in a stepfamily in which a partner might not be the biological parent of some offspring in the family? The notion of the 'good-enough' parent offers a helpful insight for negotiating these.

'Good-Enough' Parenting

It has been acknowledged throughout this discussion that we live in an imperfect world in which ideals are not always attained. There is no such thing as a perfect parent. In his discussion of an *Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction*, Lee borrows Winnicot's concept of the 'good-enough' mother, which refers to the basic condition that a mother provides that which is adequate for a child's emotional development. The 'good-enough' mother is not perfect. However, what she does, in the interest of the child's well-being compensates for other actions detrimental to the child, which in her imperfection she is prone to do. For Lee, there are advantages to the 'good-enough' parent. Their imperfection helps prepare a child for living in an imperfect world,'...for the gradual introduction of frustration into a basically trustworthy relationship is necessary for the infant to adapt realistically to the outside world.'[155]

Where there are situations that deviate from the ideals, we must ask, to what extent are they able to provide an environment that is adequate for the well-being of a family? The single parent family might be one such situation. Many of the participants in our study pointed to what they saw as some of the shortfalls in single-parenting for overall family well-being but what was also emphasised was that a single parent often did provide an environment of a 'good-enough' parent.[156]

---

[155] C. Lee, "Toward An Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, C. Kettler; T. Speidell (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), p. 309.

[156] See Chapter 3, Section 3.5 under the heading - Insights about Family Life, pp. 188-189.

> *It would be foolish to ignore all the evidence of poor outcomes for children in lone-parent households. But it would be equally foolish to ignore the evidence from experience of the many parents doing an excellent job for their children and the many children from lone-parent households who have developed into mature stable adults.*[157]

Therefore, it is not being a single parent family, which in itself leads to the problems that our participants pointed to. What seems plausible is that factors attendant to single-parenting such as less paternal investment, an overworked and underpaid mother and unplanned parenting might contribute to some single parent families being less sustainable. It is here that the temptation for 'scapegoating' must be avoided. The response that a Christian vision of family might offer to the single parent, as a vulnerable part of the community, should be compassionate support rather than blame. Like the orphans and widows of the Israelite community and the early Church, single parents need the support of the wider community in ways that empower and include them.

Another growing situation that presents peculiar challenges is the stepfamily. Again we must ask, to what extent are stepfamilies able to provide an environment that is adequate for the well-being of a family? For some of the research participants, living with a stepparent was often associated with a negative experience of family. Yet as case family one suggests, although Tom was stepfather to the six children of his cohabiting partner, he had a loving and caring relationship with them, which was in contrast to the children's experiences of their biological fathers. [158] The New Testament example of Joseph, who was effectively Jesus' stepfather, illustrates how such situations can become a context of 'good-enough' parenting. Joseph not only honoured his covenant partner Mary, but he also honoured unconditionally the fruit of her womb. He committed himself to be spouse and co-parent with her, even of a child who was not biologically his. We turn now to how these insights of a theology of parenthood might inform family praxis.

---

[157] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 46.

[158] See p. 177.

Parenthood and Family Praxis

1. The idea of intentionality augmented by the principle of 'family by choice' means that planned parenting, including the use of contraceptives, needs to become a more proactive component of churches' teaching and outreach ministry. Family ministry must also promote the ideal of committed partnership before procreation, which might increase the likelihood that parenting will be intentional. Moreover, parents need to be liberated from the fragmentation of our slavery past and persistent economic hardships and to be encouraged to see the connections between parenting and spousal roles.

2. Parenting education that helps parents to appreciate the tremendous role they play as God's representatives in fulfilling a family's purpose is an important part of family praxis. It must facilitate the faithful commitment of parents to their children for life. This implies a willingness to work with parents - mothers and fathers - who, for whatever reason, find difficulty living out their faithfulness to each other and to their children. Many parents need help to develop skills such as communication and appropriate discipline for children of different ages. In light of what has been said by the research participants about the absence of love or affection, parents need to be supported in developing appropriate ways to communicate love, affection and affirmation to their children. Also, as a community, an important part of churches' praxis is to help those who have not experienced love in their development and whose parenting skills might be affected by this. To do so, churches might need to take the risk of building relationships with those who are not its members because it is only in relationships that people experience what it means to be loved and to love in return. The real basis of 'good-enough' parenting is love. Some mechanics of parenting might be taught but as was suggested by Chevannes in his interview, love has to be experienced. The gap in one's capacity to love, created by not experiencing love in one's development, '…can't be filled by just talking. It has to be filled by relationships …building relationships with people and fostering a different sense of self in them.'[159]

---

[159] See excerpt 2, from transcript of interview with Barry Chevannes, Appendix VIII-C, p. 414.

3. Family mediation which offers supportive intervention in situations where parents are separated, is becoming increasingly important in the face of high levels of fragmentation when unions breakdown. What might require similar intervention are the many situations where parents do not live in the same household and support might be needed to help them to preserve their commitment to their children. Similarly, help to mediate the complexities of stepfamilies will also need to be considered.

4. Addressing the male problematic should be another area of family praxis. It seems that part of the emancipation advocated by this family theology, can only come out of a radical critical awareness on the part of men of what is lost when they live out this problematic and the culture should seek to provide a cradle in which paternal involvement can be nurtured. There will be need, for example, for men and women to see fathering as more than financial provision and where possible mediation provided to negotiate for paternal involvement when a father is unable to make a financial contribution for legitimate reasons. For many men repairing the psychological damage of the past is necessary if levels of paternal involvement are to increase. In the meantime, substitutes for father involvement need to be considered, some of which are already at work such as step-fathering or the substitute role of males in the extended family (like uncles in the African tradition) and the mentoring systems in church, school and community.

5. Wider community support for and involvement in parenting might also need to be revived particularly for single parents. Family praxis should foster partnerships within the extended family, between families and the wider community, and between families and the state. Trends towards 'privatisation' of child-rearing on the one hand, and exploitation by community powerbrokers on the other, which were seen in Cross Town, highlight the need to balance the individual and corporate perspectives of parenting. Families should therefore parent considering their responsibility to the wider community and in return communities have a responsibility to support and care for families.

CONCLUSION

What has been discussed in this chapter is a family theology that addresses the contextual realities of Caribbean inner-city life. It is set against the backdrop of an ongoing process of emancipation in which family can play a significant role. The family theology is grounded in the cardinal Christian doctrines of God and redemption. It is bolstered moreover by two ethical principles namely the emancipatory and gospel ethic. These have guided the shaping of a theological framework for family that not only advances emancipation but is also faithful to a contemporary enactment of the gospel.

The family theology has been built around relationality as the central paradigm from which an understanding of God's purpose for family may be expressed. This has been developed into a theology of unions, sex and sexuality and parenthood. The intention has been to provide a framework which gives families the freedom to be and to become more fully fashioned into the image of God, and in turn to fashion its members to reflect God's image. What is more, it provides a basis for more effective family praxis. In the concluding chapter a model of inner-city family ministry that derives from this emancipatory family theology is presented.

CHAPTER 5
THE WHOLE CHURCH FOR ALL FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

This process of theological exploration began with praxis and in this chapter comes back to it. It was my experience in pastoral and chaplaincy ministries that prompted the desire to explore in-depth the current situation of families in the Caribbean. Jamaica was used as the unit of research for a process of analysis and reflection. This has given rise to a model for inner-city family pastoral care to be outlined in this chapter. The hope is that this model can encourage a more liberative experience of family and in turn advance the interest of fuller emancipation for Caribbean people.

The journey has taken us through a socio-historical glance at family life patterns in the Caribbean, which was augmented by empirical work in an inner-city community in Kingston, Jamaica. The insights from the research findings in this community have been brought into dialogue with relevant insights from non-theological disciplines, contemporary family theology and the scriptures. Out of that dialogue has emerged a theological framework for understanding and responding to inner-city families in the Caribbean. This 'emancipatory family theology' forms the basis for a reformed praxis proposed in this chapter. This brings us to the **moment of new praxis** which completes the spiral process of the theological methodology underpinning this study.

In the first section, the nature of the relationship between church and family that is necessary if it is to facilitate family empowerment for fuller emancipation will be examined.

In the second part, the relationship between family and society and how family pastoral care might be informed by or inform family-related public policy will be explored.

The third section outlines a model for inner-city family pastoral care which might be adaptable to different contexts in the Caribbean and possibly beyond. At the end of

Chapter three, it was noted that one of the likely factors hampering effective family ministry in inner-city communities like Cross Town is the Church's model for family pastoral care. This was argued to be inadequate and the proposed model seeks to respond to these shortfalls of the current approach to family ministry. [1]

The fourth and final section concludes the thesis by pointing to possible areas for further theological study in the area of Caribbean family-related pastoral theology. It also issues a call to action by churches in the Caribbean in the interest of family empowerment.

[1] See Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion under the heading – Insights about the Church's Theology and Model of Ministry, pp. 193-194.

SECTION 5.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND FAMILY

The Church has traditionally been perceived as being involved with families because of its role in significant life cycle events such as christenings, weddings and funerals. The Church, from its perspective, has always had an involvement with family life in various ways.

One reason for this is the teaching of the scriptures. The notion of 'family' is a consistent theme throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Use of metaphors such as 'household of God' and 'family of God' in reference to God's faith-community, suggests the special regard with which the notion of a family is held. Even though the form a family takes is not specifically outlined in scripture, it is fair to say that it was regarded as the basic unit for the Hebrew society, and every effort was made to preserve its integrity.[2] As a consequence, many of the Mosaic laws had a bearing on the welfare of the family.[3]

Another reason for the Church's involvement in family life stems from the many pastoral care and counselling issues that naturally arise from family experiences. The struggles of maintaining healthy family relations as well as coping with the hurts that are often a feature of our experiences in families generate the need for emotional healing. The Church has often been a facilitator of that healing.

Additionally, the Church's involvement with family issues is related to its interest to guard the moral and spiritual well-being of persons and societies, which are determined by family life. If the integrity of families is threatened this can undermine the wholeness of people or unravel their moral fabric, then the Church is called to exercise a liberating influence. As this study has argued, family life has the potential to be both a source of bondage or of liberation. The Church is strategically placed to play a role in the empowerment of inner-city families to be more liberative.

---

[2] See for example Numbers 1.

[3] See Leviticus: Chapters 18, 20, 21 and Deuteronomy: Chapters 1-6.

What seems evident from what has been said so far is that there is an undeniable relationship between family life and church life. However, Jesus' radical discipleship teaching often raised questions about the nature of the relationship between the Church (the spiritual family) and one's natural family. If the Church is to have an empowering effect on natural families as well as serve the interests of the Kingdom, three features should characterise the relationship between families and the Church. These features form part of the foundation for the model of family pastoral care to be presented in section 5.3. They may be attributed partly to intuitions stimulated by analysing perspectives of research participants. What this section illustrates is how these intuitions are tested for their resonance with Christian theology. The features to be considered will be the Church as model, guardian, and restorer of family life.

THE CHURCH AS MODEL OF FAMILY LIFE

Some of the research participants in the Cross Town case study felt that it was important for members in the Church to see their families as potential models for each other and for families in the wider community.[4] In addition, it was felt that churches, as whole communities, should exemplify the relational ideals of family life. Indeed some participants mentioned that the Church should be like a second family. In keeping with this, one of the ways that churches relate to families is by being a model for them to aspire to. This intuition does find resonance with Christian theology. For example, Anderson and Guersnsey make the point about the early church that, 'the corporate life of the Church, immediately following Pentecost, experienced a communal life with a domestic character.'[5] This is captured in the Greek expression koinonia - having things in common - that was used to describe the relationship the believers had with each other. This communal life shared between sisters and brothers who had a common faith in Christ mirrored the relationship of a natural family built around a covenant commitment between its members. It is in this way that the Church may be considered a model for natural families.

---

[4] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3, In-reach Initiatives, under the heading - What the Church Should Do, p. 172.

[5] R. Anderson and D. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985), p. 144.

The koinonia shared between believers however was not an end in itself purely for the benefit of individual members, but as David and Diana Garland emphasise, Jesus redefines what family means:

> *No longer is the family to be a self-serving kin group intent on feathering its own nest. Instead, it is to be the source of nurture and the channel of God's love for all of God's children.*[6]

Correspondingly, the Church can be considered as a model of family life in the way it relates to the wider community. A congregation that is serious about family pastoral care must therefore reflect this modelling relationship in the way it fosters an ethos of mutual care between its members as well as in the way it mobilises its members to care for families in the wider community.

THE CHURCH AS GUARDIAN OF FAMILY LIFE

In spite of their criticisms of the Church, research participants retained an expectation for the Church to play a role in providing moral and spiritual guidance as well as nurture for the community families.[7] For them, the Church had a role in helping to improve family life. This was reflected for example in their lament for more guidance to be given to young people, especially to help them to make decisions about relationships and sex. Against this background, the Church should relate to families as a guardian of family units. Again this resonates with Christian theology. Surely, Jesus' teaching points to a priority of the Kingdom family over natural family and the interest of the wider community over individual interests, but these do not preclude the importance of guarding the natural family as a unit.

The family-oriented aim of much of Moses' laws seems to support this.[8] Also Jesus, in spite of His emphasis on the Kingdom, was nurtured by a natural family. There is a place therefore for affirming and protecting close intimate relationships such as

---

[6] D. E. Garland and D. R. Garland, "The Family: Biblical and Theological Perspectives," in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidall, T. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), p. 231.

[7] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading -The Church's Purpose, p. 167.

[8] See Leviticus: Chapters 18, 20, 21; Deuteronomy: Chapters 1-6.

those in a family unit. More importantly, if God has given families for the formation of the divine image in each person as advocated, then it is important for each person to have some experience of a family unit.

Guarding the family as a unit means nurturing families and values that are compatible to family well-being. This process of nurturing should be informed by the insights of an emancipatory theology outlined in the previous chapter. For example the concepts of 'family by choice,' 'responsible sexual choosing,' 'covenant relationships' and 'gender equality' might be helpful principles that guard the well-being of family units.

The Church should also guard the space of a family unit. One of the concerns some church participants pointed to was the tendency for some churches to emphasise allegiance to church at the expense of the natural family. Very often, it was said, churches had too many activities with high expectations for members to participate leaving little time for their families.[9] Moreover, as one community pastor suggested, churches' activities were often organised along lines such as gender and age groups.[10] Although this is necessary at times it tended to separate families into parts rather than fostering the sense of a unit. The value that is placed on a family, as a unit, must be reflected in the way church life honours and guards the space of the family unit.

Additionally, the inclusion of persons who might not be in some kind of family unit is an important aspect of how the Church relates as a guardian of family life. The perspective of family as being more than blood, which has both cultural and biblical resonance, should facilitate the inclusion of persons such as singles, widows, widowers, orphans or loners into some kind of family in the interest of their continued formation into God's image. Churches might need to consider how its language about marriage and family can sometimes exclude many in this group. It should also think about creative ways of being 'surrogate families' fulfilling the picture painted by the psalmist who writes, 'A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families....'[11]

---

[9] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading - What the Church Should Do, p. 172.

[10] See excerpt 6, from transcript of interview with community pastor, Appendix VII, p. 400.

[11] Psalm 68:5-6 (NIV).

Family pastoral care which is serious about the Church's guardianship of family life will need to be sensitive as to how its activities might undermine the time families have to spend together. It should seek to balance the notion of families as units, whatever their composition, with the need to include those who might not feel a part of a natural family. Guardianship of family life also means nurture and should be reflected in the teaching, church life, liturgy, ministry to church and non-church families as well as in advocacy for pro-family support in the wider social debate.

THE CHURCH AS RESTORER OF FAMILY LIFE

The obvious gap between family expectation and family experience in Cross Town, alluded to earlier in this study as well as the illusive quest for emancipation, suggests the need for bridging and restoration.[12] Consequently, not only should the Church guard the integrity of family life and the need that each person has to belong to a family, but also the Church must relate to families as restorer. This intuition seems a natural offshoot of a family theology built on the doctrine of redemption, and so there is resonance with Christian theology. What is more, in the Caribbean the Church's restorative role is enacted against the backdrop of a history that has left its scars on the psyche of a people and on family patterns. Pastoral care should therefore attempt to restore what has been lost by a painful history and seek healing for these hurts.

In a context where what is indigenous tends to be rejected in favour of what is other, 'indigenous' family forms are often not acknowledged as family and the role they play is sometimes not affirmed. This was reflected in the ambivalence demonstrated by some participants towards non-marital families. For example, it was suggested that persons in common-law unions who had children should be prepared to separate if marriage was not forthcoming even if this meant disrupting a family unit.[13] These reactions suggest that there is suspicion about the integrity of some family forms that render them less worthy of the effort to preserve or sustain them.

---

[12] See Section 3.5 Concluding Discussion under the heading - Insights about Family Life, p. 189.

[13] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 Concluding Discussion under the heading - Perceptions of the Church's Vision, p. 162.

Part of the Church's role therefore might need to be the restoration of confidence in 'indigenous' families to be 'good-enough' families that are worthy of the support they need to compensate for whatever shortfalls they might have. Part of the work, no doubt, might also be the restoration of whatever is missing so as to make for more whole families. Restoring the important role of the father is an apt example of this, so too is restoring the importance of affection and affirmation in family communication.

As the findings from the case study suggested, not only is family formation in the inner city often unstable and unpredictable, but also some aspects of family life can lead to dysfunctional outcomes that need healing. In the long-term, restoration might mean the need for a cultural paradigm shift in family attitudes if dysfunctional outcomes are to be minimised. In particular, over the long-term, there needs to be a paradigm shift from happenstance to family by choice, from gender hierarchy to gender equality, from privatised lone parenting to community and partnership in parenting and from reproduction centred to relationship centred family life.

In the short-term however, what seems to be needed is support for families. The Church that is restorer must not only take history and its effects seriously but it must also grapple with the present hurts and struggles of families. The Church should help persons find healing from these hurts as well as restore greater stability to more families. It should 'support and (where necessary) help reform families and households to enable them to be places where justice and neighbourly love are fostered and where old and young, men, women and children can grow into the image of God.'[14] Whereas some of this work might need to take place at the level of family units as a whole, much of the work will have to be with groups and individuals where the focus can be on such things as overcoming the hurt of being 'a mistake' or on developing critical consciousness and renewing attitudes to sex and sexuality.

---

[14] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), pp. 89-90.

SUMMARY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND FAMILY

What is evident is that the Church and family have an integral relationship theologically. What is more, community residents expect the Church to play a greater role in promoting family well-being. What seemed unmistakable in Cross Town however was that currently the Church is not doing enough. If churches in inner-city communities are to respond more effectively to families and their concerns, they will need to review their model of family pastoral care. Such a model needs to develop an understanding of the Church as model, guardian and restorer of family life. In addition, the model must be cognisant of family-related public policy. The relationship between family and society will now be considered.

SECTION 5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIETY AND FAMILY

This section looks briefly on the relationship between society and the family and the relative roles of government, private sector, families and civil institutions like the church, in the care and support of family life. Also to be considered are the family-related public policy in the Caribbean with special reference to Jamaica as well as some of its implications for the Church's model of family praxis.

Whether families are viewed as the basic unit of a society or not, what is undeniable is that a dynamic relationship exists between society and families. The state of a society influences family well-being and vice versa. Family life should therefore serve the interest of the wider society. Likewise, the society should be so organised that family life is protected and supported.

> *Society has a vested interest in the well-being of families, because families are where people live and are cared for. But families cannot be expected to do everything for themselves, and society needs to ensure that there is a framework within which families have access to appropriate employment, housing, education, specialist health services and so on.*[15]

If it is accepted that families on their own cannot care for themselves especially in vulnerable situations as those found in inner-city communities, then who should care and provide help for families? When we look at the range of needs and concerns of families in Cross Town, what seems evident is that there is a role for government, the private sector and civil institutions to play in the delivery of support for families. The government, for example, should create the conditions that allow access to education, health and employment as well as providing a safe and secure environment and the legal framework within which families can thrive. Similarly, the private sector should offer fair wages and working conditions that are 'family friendly.' Civil institutions should play the role of advocate, calling government and the private

---

[15] Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society* (London, Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 7.

sector to account for these provisions as well as supporting families in their various situations of vulnerability.

What often happens however, as Browning et al point out, is that 'churches and local communities as part of civil society are often undermined by market and state.'[16] The precise balance between the relative roles of each of these players is a source of much discussion in contemporary family debates.[17] A family's privacy and autonomy together with parental authority are seen by some as paramount features that must be preserved by limiting government intervention. Conversely, others feel that government intervention is indispensable if the welfare of the most vulnerable is to be maintained. The problem sometimes is that government-sponsored welfare-type assistance can create dependencies and encourage abuse of the system. Another concern commonly voiced in the face of the growing power and demand of the market driven economies and pervasive materialism is the detrimental effects that private sector policies, focused on profit, can have on family well-being. For example, the demands of a company to maximise its profits might mean employees working for less than adequate wages and overtime to meet deadlines resulting in their spending less time with their families. The threat of this happening has been at the heart of much of the Church's concern over the Jamaican government's announcement about the possible introduction of flexi-time work hours ostensibly to boost productivity and increase employment.[18]

What seems clear is that each of these players has a role in the care and support of family life but it is important that some kind of balance be maintained between their respective roles. There should be a more dynamic role of the Church as part of civil society in the care and support of families. This is so for three main reasons.
First of all, family life is deeply theological. Families have a significant place in God's human economy. As such, the Church should participate in public debate

---

[16] D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 247.

[17] For a fuller discussion of some of the issues in this debate see D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000) and R. Ruether, *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family* (London: SCM Press, 2001).

[18] Since 2001 the government of Jamaica, as part of its attempts to boost the economy, has been looking into the possibility of introducing a flexible workweek. This has met with fierce resistance from many sectors of society especially the Church.

about the family and the delivery of family care in an effort to preserve a theological vision of the family that transcends ideological and economic concerns.

Secondly, the Church, as one of the main institutions in civil society, can help to contain the influence of government and private sector thereby maintaining a balance of their respective roles in a way that preserves the priority of families. This is a critical role that is unique to the Church given its character, status and acceptability in the population. Moreover, in keeping with the values of responsible choice and empowerment as indicators of fuller emancipation, the containing role of the Church can foster the self-determination and empowerment of families, which often can be lost in the face of market forces or government power and welfare schemes.

Thirdly, the Church's interest in education, community transformation as well as the moral, spiritual and socio-economic well-being of persons makes it ideally suited to selflessly defend the rights of families for adequate care and support from other sectors of society which might have motives inimical to family well-being. It is important therefore for the Church to play a role in influencing family-related public policy and for this to inform the Church's family praxis. It might be helpful at this stage to take a brief look at family-related public policy in Jamaica as a reference point.

FAMILY LIFE IN JAMAICA'S PUBLIC POLICY

There is no single policy governing family life in Jamaica. Instead there are family-related policy issues in at least eleven separate policy documents. Among these are the:

- *National Policy Statement for Women -1987*
- *National Plan of Action on Population and Development -1995*
- *National Plan of Action for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children -1996*
- *National Poverty Eradication Policy -1997*
- *A Statement of National Policy for Health and Family Life Education -1999*

A cursory look at these documents reveals some points of convergence between family-related public policy and an emancipatory family theology but there are also points of differences. Some of the significant points of convergence include the:

- Priority of the family as the basic unit of society.

> *In spite of its various forms the family is the basic unit of society and as such is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support.*[19]

- Connection between family well-being and national development.

> *Its health has implications for the stability of community life and direction and the pace of national development.*[20]

- Interest in family empowerment.

> *Families, also receive their due consideration as the primary agents of socialization and child development, and are especially targeted by the National Plan of Action for strengthening and parenting education.*[21]

- Promotion of gender equity.

> *Gender equality as a basic human right is recognised by Jamaica.... The full participation of both women and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurture of children and maintenance of the household.*[22]

---

[19] Population Unit of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, *National Plan of Action on Population and Development: Jamaica 1995-2015* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995), p. 13.

[20] Ministry of Education and Culture, *A Statement of National Policy for Health and Family Life Education* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1999), p. 4.

[21] Planning Institute of Jamaica, *A National Policy on Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2001), p. 3.

[22] Population Unit of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, *National Plan of Action on Population and Development: Jamaica 1995-2015* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995), p. 9.

- Distinct interest in the collaboration between families, government agencies and community based agencies.

> *Public policy now requires all social actors such as the Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organisations, Church groups and Youth groups to play a more integral role in the socio-economic well-being of the nation.*[23]

Probably the most significant difference seemed to be the reinforcement in some of the policies of father-exclusion. Some of the policies for example speak of empowering women and children with little reference to the need to empower men as a deliberate strategy to improve family well-being. Others speak of encouraging men to be more responsible but do not seem to address the possible psychosocial issues that have contributed to a cycle of irresponsibility among many men.

Another difference is the contrasting priorities of gender relations. Although parenting and developing parenting skills are key elements of some of the policies such as the health and family life education policy, more could be said about developing the quality of male-female unions.

Conversely, the emancipatory family theology encourages inclusion of the father and partnership in parenting even when parents are not co-residential. Moreover, it affirms the theological significance of fatherhood and advocates empowerment for men by addressing the socio-economic and psychological roots of the male problematic.[24] Additionally, promotion of the quality of male-female relationships is important.

What was significant about the formulation of the policies was that there was no explicit involvement of the Church as one of the major civil institutions. In fact, the Church seems to be perceived by at least one of the policy documents as reactionary in relation to family life education. For example, in a booklet published for principals

---

[23] Government of Jamaica, *Five Year National Plan of Action for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children 1996-2002* (Kingston, Jamaica: United Nations Children Fund, 1996), pp. 1-2.

[24] For more on the concept of 'the male problematic,' see Chapter 4, Section 4.4 under the heading - Theology of Parenthood, pp. 288-289.

and teachers in the region to inform them about a *Caribbean Health and Family Life Education Programme*, religious leaders are singled out as one of the groups that might need to be convinced about the merits of the programme.[25] It is possible that the Church is seen more as an enemy to be tamed rather than an agency of support for progressive family care. Also, despite being a stakeholder in education, youth activities and child care institutions, the Church is not named as one of the agencies considered as part of a multi-agency committee to monitor the national policy for children. Although the evidence is inconclusive, it could indicate reluctance on the part of government departments to include the Church in the development of a family related public policy. Some of the implications of this for the Church's family praxis will be looked at.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH'S MODEL OF FAMILY PASTORAL CARE

The first implication for family praxis of the current family-related public policy is the need for the Church to locate itself closer to the national debate about family life. The Church must become more vocal in its advocacy for family friendly policies in various sectors of the society. It must identify with those aspects of national policy with which there is common ground and develop the trust of the wider community about its interest for family well-being. It must earn the right to be heard as an interested participant rather than perpetuate the perception that it is a hindrance to progressive family care. In addition, the Church must not be afraid to contribute to the debate the perceived missing elements such as a more compassionate approach to male empowerment. An emancipatory family theology provides the framework for contributing a theological perspective that is sensitive to contextual realities.

Secondly, the Church, as it operates within local communities, must demonstrate itself to be one of the community-based institutions that is ready to collaborate with other agencies for the care of families. As such, churches should become more proactive in leading the development of models of family care for inner-city communities. They must give more focus and resources in keeping with the national

---

[25] Pamphlet on CARICOM Health and Family Life Education Project, *A Guide to Health and Family Life Education for Principals and Teachers* (Barbados: UNICEF, 1999).

strategy for the involvement of community organisations. Some of the ways its resources might be channelled include offering its buildings for family empowerment projects, training for and provision of more counselling, family mediation and other support services.

Thirdly, family ministry should not only address the micro issues (such as parenting skills) but must also advocate for the macro social policy issues of education and community development which impact family life. It must also speak to the economic issues like the pervasive influence of monopolistic capitalism driven by consumerism, issues of drugs and party political division, of abuse of power by community dons, and of the inequalities between the haves and have-nots that perpetuate a cycle of poverty for some while increasing the material wealth of others. These implications should inform any proposed model of inner-city family pastoral care or more broadly of family ministry. Such a proposal is attempted in the next section.

SECTION 5.3 A MODEL FOR FAMILY PASTORAL CARE

The family theology discussed in the previous chapter forms the basis for what is proposed in this section. What is presented here responds to the research question: **What are the components of an effective model of church-based family ministry for Jamaica's inner cities today?**

Some components were derived from suggestions made by the research participants. Other elements have been derived from an intuitive reflection on the entire study process with particular reference to experiences gained in the conduct and analysis of the case study and individual interviews. What is being proposed cannot claim to be a detailed plan of action nor is it immediately applicable to every inner-city community in the Caribbean. What it seeks to offer is a framework that is adaptable to the nuances of each community.

It will be important to discus significant aspects of my understanding and use of the term 'pastoral care' given the fluidity with which it is used throughout theological discourse. As part of the discussion some of the implications for a model of family care that involves the 'whole' Church will be highlighted and the model will be described in terms of:

- The principles reflecting its pastoral theology
- Its priorities and
- Programmes of support and empowerment noting the possible types and features.

PASTORAL CARE... THE WHOLE CHURCH FOR ALL FAMILIES

Throughout the history of the Church, the approach to and practice of pastoral care have seen varying emphases.[26] As Stephen Pattison notes in his book, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*:

---

[26]Charles Gerkin traces a history of pastoral care through a series of epochs, each marked by a different emphasis. See Introduction to Pastoral Care, Nasville, Abingdon Press, 1997, pp. 23-51.

> *The cura animarum or care of souls as pastoral care was designated in the past, seems to have been a feature of the life of the Christian community from the earliest times. Its content and nature have however been widely different historically according to factors such as denomination, context, era and place.*[27]

This has contributed to the difficulty of defining this important area of theological endeavour.[28] The scope of this study does not allow for a full discussion of all the views in the debate about what pastoral care is, but it is possible to consider the differences in shades of meaning along four main axes. These describe the nature, aim, practitioners and recipients of pastoral care.

For the purpose of this discussion, the nature of pastoral care is taken to be faith-based acts of care undertaken by the Christian community as an integral part of its mission to declare and demonstrate God's love to all people. Its aim is considered to be the restoration of God's image and God's Kingdom reign in people and situations. Furthermore, a paradigm that may be described as a communal context of pastoral care has been adopted.[29] This is an understanding of pastoral care that sees the practitioners being the whole faith-community, clergy and lay, and sees the recipients as including but not limited to the faith-community. The recipients of family care therefore are taken to include both families within a congregation as well as those in the wider community. It is against this background that a model of family pastoral care is proposed for inner-city communities in the Caribbean, which involves 'the whole Church for all families.'

But there is more to the use of the term 'whole church'. Not only does it have implications to members of the Church but also aspects of church life. Its use has implications for at least five aspects of the Church's life, namely its ecclesiological

---

[27] Stephen Pattison, A Critique of Pastoral Care, London, SCM Press 1988, p. 7.

[28] For a fuller discussion on pastoral care, see for example A. Campbell, Ed. *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care* (London: SPCK, 1987). W. Clebsch and C. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964). C. Gerkin, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville, USA: Abingdon Press, 1997) D. Lyall, *Counselling in the Pastoral and Spiritual Context* (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1995) and J. Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context* (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1993).

[29] J. Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context* (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1993).

orientation, church teaching, policy, liturgical development and programmes for family support and empowerment.

Family ministry should include what may be described as a church's ecclesiological orientation, that is an understanding of the Church as a gathered family. Wallace Charles Smith in his book, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family*, suggests that this orientation has been part of the strength of the African-American churches and sees it as essential for effective family ministry.[30] Such an orientation predisposes a congregation not only to care for its members as part of the same family but reaches out to 'family' those in the wider community.

'Whole' also includes the Church's teaching, which should articulate the insights of an emancipatory family theology to different ages and interest groups in the Church and beyond. Some of the themes used in the last chapter such as 'family by choice' and 'responsible choosing' provide hooks upon which some of this teaching may be hung.

In addition, church policy, consistent with this theology, is important. This will have implications on matters such as the recognition of unions at different stages, admission into membership of persons in cohabitation unions, christening or dedication of babies born to such unions as well as for church discipline for persons engaged in sexual relationships prior to the celebration and acknowledgement of covenant unions.

Liturgical development is also important. Liturgies that express the theological themes referred to in Chapter four and which seek to affirm and reconcile the mixed cultural heritage of Caribbean people can help to reinforce the theological significance of different aspects of family and facilitate the paradigm shift in family perspectives required within the context of a worshipping community. Liturgies of union celebration, reconciliation or dissolution as well as rites of passage for adolescents might be worth developing as part of the interpretation of an emancipatory family theology.

---

[30] W. Smith, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family*, Judson Family Life Series, Chartier, J.; Chartier, M. (Valley Forge PA: Judson Press, 1985).

Programmes for family support and empowerment are also critical if the work with families is to result in an experience of fuller emancipation. By support, is meant programmes that provide assistance to families who are not in a position to access them on their own such as counselling, mediation services or financial grants and loans. Alternatively, empowerment refers to programmes that help to unlock the potential families have for mutual welfare and self-care. The feedback from participants in the Cross Town case study suggests that, at the moment, some of the social outreach done by churches in the community do not directly affect family welfare.[31] It is not enough for churches to be engaged with social outreach in general, such outreach must be intentional. It must be of a nature that supports as well as empowers families in intentional ways.

The model of family pastoral care being proposed begins with principles that reflect the pastoral theology of this model. There are five such principles which all stem from the emancipatory family theology.

PRINCIPLES REFLECTING A PASTORAL THEOLOGY FOR INNER-CITY FAMILY MINISTRY

The first principle guiding this model of family pastoral care is family plurality. On the basis of what has been said about a Caribbean perspective on family, there is need for ministry in the inner city to be reoriented to accommodate a broader understanding of what family means, which will allow ministry to different kinds of families. This addresses the perspective of some participants that the Church's current response to families is discriminatory and focused only on church families. Actions that suggest exclusivist notions of family or which stigmatise some family forms are therefore incompatible with this model.

The plurality principle also resists the notion of good and bad families and recognises that all families have needs. In this regard, an important caution issued by some participants in the study was that the challenges couples face after marriage should not be overlooked. Family ministry cannot just be concerned with preparing people for a union without also helping people preserve those unions. Moreover, the fact

---

[31] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading -The Church's Performance, p. 169.

that there might be advantages to the two-parent family does not mean that they do not have needs which family ministry should be responsive to.

Secondly, there is the principle of contextuality, that is, family ministry must understand and be sensitive to the context. This means understanding the factors that have a bearing on family life such as the historical and socio-economic matters discussed in this study. It also means being aware of the particular needs and concerns of families in a given community. Although some churches in Cross Town were actively involved in community outreach, it was evident that they were not addressing many of the family-related concerns. Each community has to tailor their family pastoral care according to the needs of the context.

Thirdly, family ministry must be redemptive. It should be concerned with restoration to wholeness for persons, families and communities. It restores family to pride of place among other social values. What seemed evident in Cross Town was that in a context of need and deprivation, it was easy for material and economic values to eclipse the values of family. What is being contended in this study is that family is a stepping-stone to psychosocial, spiritual, and economic liberation and as such should warrant priority attention. However, as Caribbean theologian, Charles Brown has noted in his contribution to the publication, *Fambli*:

> *The responses of the Church must be creative rather than "traditional". The question is not how can we restore a previous order, but how can we participate in God's ordering of the chaos of the family?*[32]

This process of redemption therefore begins with the Church. If the Church is to play its part in renewing the value of family, then the Church needs liberation from the shackles that holds it in neutrality because of its allegiance with its past ways of seeing and responding to families.

---

[32] C. Brown, "The Traditional View of the Family: A Reappraisal of Roles in Light of Contemporary Thinking", in L. Haynes Ed. *Fambli: The Church's Responsibility to the Family in the Caribbean* Conference Proceedings, (1972), p. 62.

Redemptive family ministry restores that which people long for and need in their experiences of family. As such, it helps people, by their own choosing, to bridge the gap between what they desire and what they experience of family life. For example, in keeping with the Cross Town residents' longing for family stability, family ministry works at empowering them to make choices for more lasting unions, enriches the quality of their relationships and helps them reduce the number of the unions they pass through. It should also restore persons from the effects of dysfunctional family experiences. As it does so, those who share in family ministry have to acknowledge that restoration is a process that cannot be limited; it must be holistic. Not only must it be geared to look beyond 'quick fix' notions of family care but also it should be prepared to engage with the range of emotional, social and material needs of the multifaceted human person if restoration is to be realized.

Fourthly, family ministry is concerned with empowerment, not control. This is one implication of a family theology aimed at fostering a more complete emancipation, marked by a critical consciousness that guides choosing and a willingness to take responsibility for one's decisions and one's destiny. Old style hegemonic approaches, talked about in the last chapter which characterise the current responses of churches to family life issues, run the risk of either pandering to dependency tendencies in Caribbean culture or of being judgemental towards some family forms in a way that retards the affirmation and self valuing that fuller emancipation demands. If it is to empower, family ministry should help people to overcome the idea that life is out of their control and that they have to be victims of luck. Rather it helps them to take control of their destiny.

Likewise, family pastoral care that is empowering refuses to accept uncritically, pre-packaged methods of care. In this regard, the comments of one of the community pastors referred to in Chapter three about the need to avoid imposing external methods of training parents must be borne in mind. For example, 'indigenous' models of care built around the extended family might be a basis for developing viable methods for increasing the level of supervision many children currently receive in places like Cross Town. One of the challenges of providing family support is doing so in a way which does not rob a family of its internal resources and potential to find its own ways of coping with hardships. Strategies for family care should emerge out of a mutual relationship between families built upon the notion of

partnership between families and communities. Churches should play the role of facilitator and bridge builder between families, empowering them to learn from one another, how to care for themselves and each other. Family ministry should ultimately empower and liberate, not disempower by creating dependency. Consequently, welfare schemes and support programmes from more developed countries cannot be transplanted uncritically into the Caribbean situation.

Fifthly, family ministry should be evangelistic, announcing the good news of transformation in Christ. Informed by a gospel ethic, this model of family ministry acknowledges that every act of pastoral care is a context of encounter between humankind and God in which relationship with God and a viable spirituality might be ignited or stirred. As faith-based praxis built on Christian beliefs, this model of family pastoral care recognises that ultimately a transformed life can only be sustained by the power of the Spirit working in that life. Moreover, personhood and wholeness are incomplete without a meaningful relationship with God. Family ministry is not just about improving the quality of life for persons, families and communities but the formation of the image of God and the reign of God's Kingdom, which are only possible when each person is in right relationship with God.

PRIORITIES

Family pastoral care must respond to the needs and concerns that are real for a community. The principle of contextuality alerts us to the fact that those needs and concerns that are true of one place might not be present in all inner-city communities. However, using Cross Town as an example, it is possible to illustrate how the needs and concerns recognized there might lead to the identification of priority areas for family ministry. In Chapter three, some primary and subsidiary needs and concerns that emerged out of the analysis of the Cross Town data were discussed.[33]

A detailed proposal of programmes for family pastoral care would require a more in-depth needs analysis, which is outside the scope of this study. However, from the analysis done in this research, it is possible to suggest areas of priority focus on the basis of two main criteria. One criterion would have to do with the level of

---

[33] See Table 7, p. 156.

importance to community residents. For this reason, those things listed as primary concerns in Table 7 are key indicators of priority focus. A closer exploration of these issues could yield useful information for developing a comprehensive family care plan.

The other criterion would have to do with the likely spin-off effects that might help address some of the other concerns. Higher priority should be given to foci that have the greater spin-off effects on other family concerns. This can be illustrated by discussing four possible focal areas for Cross Town that the exploratory analysis of this research project points to. These are economics, relationship enrichment, family mediation and parenting.

As the analysis of the Cross Town data suggests financial need caused by unemployment or low-paying jobs encouraged opportunistic family alliances and profoundly affected patterns such as unplanned parenting and father absence. In addition, some of the harshness associated with parent-child interactions as well as low levels of supervision could be related to the stresses of overworked or underpaid parents. Addressing the economic concern could conceivably have the greatest ripple effect on family well-being. Not only might it help lessen these patterns of family but could contribute generally to a better quality of life for families in Cross Town.

Yet this focus is probably the most difficult to achieve. Years of economic stagnation, increasing levels of crime and the lure of the lucrative trade in illegal drugs have limited investment and stifled employment growth. Churches in Cross Town surely will need programmes that offer grants or loans to families for things such as education expenses. More importantly however, empowerment through education and training for employment must be twinned with this focus. Programmes that broaden employment options for people or help them create their own wealth through various entrepreneurial initiatives are crucial to meaningful family praxis for fuller emancipation. Ultimately, without radical shifts in the national and global economy from the priority of profit to the priority of people, the effects of economic deprivation on family life will continue to be a major concern for inner-city residents.

Relationship enrichment is another possible focus area for family care in Cross Town. Essentially this is to promote the quality of interactions between family members. Such a focus might develop interpersonal skills that help unions to become more stable with an attendant effect on family stability. Another possible spin-off effect might be better community trust and cohesion. This in turn could encourage a return to more community parenting. Programmes that help couples work through their difficulties as well as raise consciousness levels for more lasting unions might be important elements of family ministry for church members and community residents who do not attend church. A shift away from the current value for multiple partners and gender hierarchy seem integral to this, and may require a comprehensive programme of education and discussion for various age groupings.

Family mediation is another focal area of family ministry. When a family faces difficult phases, the accumulated pressure of multiple challenges can at best destabilise it or at worse cause fragmentation. That could be the case with many families in Cross Town, hence the concerns for family stability. Family ministry could offer support to negotiate the difficulties associated with union breakdown, inter-household alliances, migration and adjustments to stepfamilies which present considerable challenges to family stability. This focus may also help facilitate the ongoing involvement of fathers and lessen the effects of father absence.

Parenting is another possible area of focus for family ministry in Cross Town. This might need to begin with pre-parenting guidance for teenagers, promoting the need for protection of teenage girls from community 'dons' as well as the support for teenage mothers. This could contribute to reducing the spiral of consecutive childbearing unions among the latter. In general, these approaches would help to address some of the concerns for moral guidance and for community welfare that research participants expressed. Helping parents learn from each other appropriate skills for communication and discipline of their children could positively influence the psychosocial effects of family life on children and help to improve the quality of family relationships. A parenting focus might address community welfare issues related to supervision of children particularly for those parents who have to be at work. The focus might also develop strategies for interaction with significant males in the absence of the biological fathers, thereby alleviating some of the effects of father absence.

Whatever the priority areas decided by a community, the model of family pastoral care would involve developing relevant programmes. An emancipatory family theology will have implications for the features of such programmes and those will now be addressed.

PROGRAMMES FOR INNER-CITY FAMILY SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT

TYPES OF PROGRAMMES

Within the framework of an emancipatory family theology, the possibility exists for three types of inner-city family ministry programmes - supportive, restorative or educative.

A supportive programme of pastoral family care should look out for and be actively interested in the hurt and the vulnerable. This follows from the acknowledgement of human frailty, which is central to the underlying family theology. This also flows out of an understanding of the Church's role as guardian and model of the family. As such, it works to preserve and protect the integrity of families as well as to be a family to families. The pregnant teenager who has been turned out of her home needs support. So does the father being refused access to his children because he is unemployed or the couple who is finding it difficult to resolve their conflicts. Counselling, guidance, prayer or other spiritual resources, support groups or financial assistance could be some of the forms this support might take. What seemed clear in the minds of many of the participants is that family support needs to have practical manifestations.

Programmes that are restorative give life to this model's redemptive character. It is here that the Church's role as restorer finds its fullest expression. This includes activities that promote the importance of family in general but particularly as a channel for fuller emancipation. It also includes programmes that facilitate the restoration of persons and relationships from the effects of the past or dysfunctional family life that might threaten the quality of their existence. Facilitating the restoration of male-female and parent-child relationships seem to be some of the

important restorative tasks for families in Cross Town and this may be true of other similar communities as well.

Educative programmes stem from a family theology with an interest in empowerment and which appreciates the unique role of guidance that churches can play in relation to families. Part of this educative task Leo-Rhynie suggests, is providing moral and spiritual guidance, which she sees as a distinct and unique role for the Church and the Christian faith to play.

> *The principles of the Christian religion transcend all denominational lines and provide a strong foundation on which family lives can be built. The love and relationships, which exist between parents and children, can well be patterned after Christ's love for mankind - unconditional, unselfish and giving. Sensitivity to the spiritual needs of family members allows for the identification of many opportunities each day to link the principles of honesty, justice, industry and service to their lives and experiences, and so spiritual guidance is interwoven with family life...*[34]

Educative programmes should help people to grow in their awareness about themselves in an affirming environment. Moreover, it should help people to explore their experiences of family, critically assess them and develop the skills that make for improved family life. This may involve re-education such as the de-colonisation of current understanding of marriage with its stress on contract over covenant, or replacing the cultural misconceptions with an awareness of the broader natural, social and theological significance of a covenant union. Ultimately, it is a paradigm shift towards a cultural orientation more in keeping with sustainable family life that is the aim of educative programmes.

Discussion groups, community-wide programmes promoting positive family living with the use of contemporary music and drama might be some of the ways to undertake this educative task. In the final part of this section, the features of family ministry programmes are discussed.

---

[34] E. Leo-Rhynie, *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993), p. 53.

FEATURES OF FAMILY MINISTRY PROGRAMMES

Inclusive

Programmes, in this model of family pastoral care, need to be inclusive. This arises from at least three considerations coming out of the Cross Town analysis. One is the apparent need to reach both church and non-church families. Another is the need to reach families based on legal marriage as well as other families. A third consideration is the need to reach both men and women.

> *As an inclusive community, the Church must keep being vigilant in having a scope of ministry that includes people living on the edges.*[35]

If the Church is to be a family to families in the community then it must operate inclusively. Their programmes by the audiences they target, their content, delivery and location must aim to serve the widest possible constituents with family support and empowerment.

Participatory

Programmes that are a part of the family support and empowerment should also be participatory rather than prescriptive. They should involve people, not just speak at them. One of the illuminating aspects of the research came from doing the focus group discussions. Not only were those groups informative but also they contributed to a shift in my underlined perceptions about inner-city family life. It was also striking that most participants would remark positively about their experiences of being in a group discussion. Added to this has been the periodic reminder that people have gifts and knowledge and do not always need experts to bring prescriptions for their problems. These considerations have led me to think of the important need for programmes of family care to encourage participation that conceivably could be built around a strategy of small groups.

---

[35] A. Allen, "The Mission of the Church in a Post-Modern Jamaica," *Daily Observer* (Kingston, Jamaica), May 2, 2001, p. 7.

Such an approach could empower participants by affirming the gifts that each person brings. Moreover, participation could mean commitment and reflecting on one's own family issues. It therefore creates an opportunity for experiential learning that is more likely to result in the desired change for improved family life. If programmes are to be truly participatory then they must heed the cry of the research participants for the Church to meet people where they are - outside the walls of the Church.

Targeted

Inner-city family pastoral care should have programmes that are targeted. This means identifying special interest groups in keeping with the focal areas. Two possible examples that might apply to Cross Town will illustrate the point.

After speaking to Doris and Marie (the mothers mentioned in the two case studies in Chapter 3, Section 3.4), I began to imagine the difference to their lives that a programme targeting teenage mothers might make in a community like Cross Town where many get caught in a spiral of poverty after their first pregnancy. Teenage mothers might therefore be a likely target group for family pastoral care.

Similarly when we consider the levels of father absence, the difficulties men find in committing to relationships, the exclusion from family participation some experience because of being unemployed, then men and boys in Cross Town could be another target group for empowerment. This is particularly significant when seen in light of the impact of both a history of slavery and contemporary economic hardships on men. Although women continue to live with considerable inequalities they are finding more effective ways of coping and maintaining their contribution to family life. It is possible that only intensive psychosocial work with men will help to undo some of the hurts of the past. Faith Linton alluded to this when she said:

> *Somehow I kept seeing things from a woman's point of view... I was still seeing them as not doing this; they are not being what they ought to be. But I had not grasped the depth of the problem and how deep-seated it is and how very serious is the problem with our men and where it's coming from.... To me it's a deeply psychological problem...you have to approach it from a counselling point of view.*

(See excerpt 1, from transcript of interview with Faith Linton, Appendix VIII-B, pp. 407-409).

Ecumenical

It will take programmes that are organised ecumenically to effect community-wide family empowerment. One of the issues some participants pointed to was the need for churches to be more unified in their efforts to serve the community.[36] What became evident as I worked in collaboration with the Ministers' Fraternal was that no single congregation by virtue of its location, size or resources at its disposal had the potential to impact the entire community. Unified action across denominational barriers is therefore indispensable if the impact on families is to permeate the whole community.

Not all the churches in the area had the same commitment to doing things together. Less than half of the churches listed as part of the Fraternal had participated in its meetings and activities organised during the research period. This, along with differences that presently exist in theological and pastoral orientation, make ecumenical action one of the significant challenges for a comprehensive family ministry not only in Cross Town but other inner-city communities in which a cross section of denominations operate.

The range of denominations represented in the leadership of the Fraternal and the desire for more community engagement on the part of many of the pastors interviewed, are signs of hope. It is this glimmer of hope, coupled with the urgent need for family support and empowerment, which is behind the call to action in the concluding section of this thesis.

---

[36] See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 under the heading - What the Church Should Do, p.172.

SECTION 5.4 CONCLUSION: TIME FOR ACTION

RECAPPING THE STUDY PROCESS

This section takes the thesis to its conclusion with a call to the Caribbean Church towards action for family empowerment. In it, the steps of the study process will be retraced, some areas for further theological research in the area of family pastoral theology will be identified and the Church will be challenged to see family ministry as a contemporary priority for Caribbean theology.

This study has been an embodiment of both a personal call to bridge building and a work in Caribbean theological method. Throughout the study, bridges have been built between different areas of theology as well as between theology and other disciplines. Also, it has operated with a presupposition of theology as a unity without divisions into theoretical and practical aspects. Most importantly, it has sought to bridge the gap between religious and cultural values and ultimately between the Church and the community to which it ministers.

In addition, the study has explored the challenges to family ministry posed on the one hand by patterns of family life found in the Caribbean, and on the other, by the inadequacy of the Church's theology and model of family. Against the background of the historical realities of the region and with the help of sociological and historical research, the characteristic features of Afro-Caribbean families were outlined. The study went on to discuss the factors that contributed to their development during the period of slavery and down to the present time. The origins and focal areas of a Caribbean theology were also sketched and a place for this project within this framework argued for. Contemporary changes in the field of practical theology that are influencing the way we think about and carry out theological endeavours were then examined. Against this background, a detailed interpretation of a Caribbean way of doing theology was then outlined as a guide for the methodology this study would employ.

As a work in Caribbean theology the study has mirrored an action-reflection-action dynamic with a central motif of emancipation and the value of intuition as a source of knowledge. Furthermore, as a theology of liberation it has been contextual and

praxis-centred. As such, it started with the current situation of family life in the context being explored. It then moved to an analysis of the context with the aid of a case study sited in Kingston, Jamaica. The study then sought to reflect theologically on the analysis of the case study, informed by sources of the faith and insights from non-theological disciplines. An emancipatory family theology was proposed as well as a model for new praxis in inner-city family ministry.

What the analysis has indicated is that although inner-city residents are suspicious sometimes of the Church's motives, they see a role for the Church in empowering families. What was also apparent was that the Church currently was not effectively meeting the needs of families either in the Church or in the community. What is more, there is a perceived divergence between God's vision of community families and that of the Church. Added to this, the study revealed the range of needs inner-city families face as well as the absence of sufficient support systems. Even though the Church is meeting some of the needs, there is more that it will need to do if it is to truly be the extension of the caring hands of Jesus to hurting families.

Hitherto churches in the Caribbean have been ineffective in spite of their active reflection on the issues of family. The results of this study offer a framework and theological basis that hopefully can bridge the gap between what God wants for families and what the Church wants. More importantly, it could enable the Church to deliver a more effective family ministry. This in turn could result in a more liberating experience for families, communities and Caribbean society as a whole. This study however, represents only a part of the process, which must be tested in the 'laboratory' of pastoral engagement. It illustrates a constructive mode, based on empirical study, which should become an increasing feature of Caribbean theology. Some of the other areas of family pastoral theology in need of further research might be worth identifying. Five such areas will be briefly highlighted.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One important area is that of gender harmony. It might be helpful to explore sources of gender conflict in Caribbean societies, and identify theological resources that may foster a deeper understanding of partnership between women and men as well as enrich other relationships in families. Theological research that compares different types of unions, their theological implications and relative impact on family functioning might also be worth further exploration.

Male issues in general and fatherhood in particular seem to be another area in need of attention. In recent years this has become one of the areas of focus for pro-family movements in North America including the African-American church community. The churches in the Caribbean might need to learn more from its counterpart in America.

> *Black churches, in their many mentoring programmes for boys, mass meetings for men of all ages, male retreats, father-son banquets, and Saturday men's breakfasts, are the leading institutions of our society helping males to attach themselves responsibly to families.*[37]

Parenting is another area that might need further exploration. Afro-Caribbean people might need to embrace some of the more democratic patterns of parenting emerging from other parts of the world. However this must be done without losing what is essentially good about Caribbean parenting. To negotiate this transition the resources of Christian theology might provide a core, to which Caribbean culture is attuned, for developing more affirming and ultimately more liberating approaches to parenting.

The relationship between identity and Caribbean family patterns such as multi-lineage heritage resulting from many childbearing unions might also be worth exploring. How the potentially fragmenting effects on the one hand may be counterbalanced by one's sense of having both paternal and maternal origins on the

---

[37] D. Browning, et al, *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 231.

other may provide insights into how this common Caribbean pattern might be harnessed for good.

The impact of religious values on family life choices could be another worthwhile area for exploration. What the present study suggested was that religious values may be a significant factor influencing family choice for the overtly religious. Further research might disaggregate this influence into different aspects of family life such as mate selection, union formation, sexual relationships, childbearing and parenting patterns. In addition, the extent to which these religious values are present in wider society as well as their influence on actual behaviour may yield insights into how religious communities might play a role in positively transforming contemporary family culture.

Further research is good and provides hope for more effective family ministry but without a conviction that family ministry warrants the Church's urgent attention today, this hope might not materialise. It is for this reason why a prophetic challenge for the Caribbean Church to embrace family ministry as a strategic area of mission focus is needed.

CARIBBEAN THEOLOGY AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Davis, in charting the theological journey of the Church in the Caribbean, traces four phases of the Church's relationship with the Caribbean people. In brief, he speaks of:

Phase One: The Church and the people - Functioning as an ally to the power structure to maintain the status quo.

Phase Two: The Church for the people - Functioning as an instrument for education and social welfare of the people but without much participation by them in the power structures.

Phase Three: The Church of the people - Characterised by greater indigenisation particularly of the leadership.

Phase Four: The People's Church - Further indigenisation as the Caribbean Church becomes more self-reliant.[38]

It is the fourth phase characterised by increased self-reliance and self-determination that Davis sees the Caribbean Church currently in. The foci of this journey so far Davis sees as falling under two broad categories namely, ecclesial and societal. These categories can form the schema for briefly assessing this journey.

In relation to its ecclesial emphasis, one of the primary foci of Caribbean theologians has been indigenisation of the Caribbean Church. This has been most evident in the development of local leadership and the nature of theological training offered in the region. Moreover, initiatives towards liturgical renewal and Christian education, though not sufficiently far-reaching, have reflected the desire to make worship and Christian discipleship more contextual. In addition, much of the writings of Caribbean theologians committed to the notion of an indigenous theology have focused on critical reflection on the colonial Church and its vestiges, which still remain. They have also sought to define the structure and methodology for contextual theological reflection. In her chapter on *Method in Caribbean Theology*, Lowe-Ching expresses the view that:

> *... in many aspects we have more than a theology which is only emerging. We are able to detect the clear outlines of a theology conscious of its primary liberative task, having at hand the tools for its formulation and employing a precise method of procedure to achieve its desired goals.*[39]

Alongside the other ecclesial emphases, there has been a parallel pursuit of ecumenism which has led to increased cooperation and understanding between various denominations particularly of the historical churches.

For its societal emphasis, Caribbean theology has focused on various issues related to socio-cultural, political and economic concerns within the region. Reflections on

---

[38] For a development of these phases, see K. Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990), pp. 72-73.

[39] T. Lowe-Ching, "Method in Caribbean Theology," Chapter in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 26-27.

political ideology and participation and mediation in situations of political conflict have been key expressions of this emphasis. The Church has also sought to speak to issues of human rights and justice facing the region and individual countries. Its response to render care and support efforts of rehabilitation in times of natural disaster has been integral to this aspect of the Church's witness. In addition, a greater willingness for individuals and church communities to engage in social outreach for poverty alleviation and community empowerment has been further evidence of this societal emphasis.

However, as some have noted, there are ongoing concerns about the tentativeness of the theological enterprise, its apparent state of inertia and its limited impact in its church life and witness as well as on the experience of Caribbean people at large.[40] In my view, there is a danger of getting stuck in critical 'mode' in which the Caribbean theological project merely criticises the past and the effects of Missionary Christianity or engages in critique of itself and the context. This tendency, along with what Lowe-Ching identifies as 'a lack of serious concrete engagement of the Caribbean Church with the struggles of the oppressed poor and marginated of the region…',[41] may account for the fact that more specialised areas such as pastoral theology have remained uncharted grounds.

This research project has tried to speak to this precise need. This it does by igniting a process of theological reflection towards a response in the area of family pastoral theology. Instead of mere critique, it attempts to find real solutions to real problems in an area that is in need of urgent attention.

As was stated throughout this study, the quest for fuller emancipation is the essential struggle of post-colonial Caribbean society. The key to the Caribbean's future action for development and the furtherance of its quest for fuller emancipation rests in the

---

[40] See for example L. Williams, "What, Why and Wherefore of Caribbean Theology," *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), pp. 29-40; T. Lowe-Ching, "Method In Caribbean Theology," in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H. (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 22-33; and G. Boodoo, "In Response to Adolfo Ham (1)," in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 7-16.

[41] Lowe Ching, T., "Latin American Theological Method and its Relevance to Caribbean Theology," *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), pp. 4-26.

liberation not just from external sources of power but from the enemy within. This involves a reconstitution of its moral framework and central to this are the main means of socialisation, education and family.

The initiatives for debt relief from overseas governments and international lending agencies are commendable and should be supported but the success of such initiatives cannot be the basis for true Caribbean emancipation. In spite of the significant power exerted over small economies like those in the region, people of the Caribbean must take responsibility for their destiny to whatever extent they are able. Consequently, there is a significant role that only Caribbean people can play for their own emancipation. Only they can free themselves from mental slavery or from the enemy within.

It is because of the deeply spiritual nature of the liberation that is sought and the deeply religious fabric of Caribbean people why religion in general and the Church in particular can play a significant part in furthering the quest for fuller emancipation. What has been argued in this thesis is that family support and empowerment will enable more families to achieve their potential as gateways to this fuller emancipation. Family ministry therefore has significance far beyond narrow ecclesial interests. Such an emphasis on family empowerment is based on the presupposition that strengthening 'social capital' is a viable strategy to achieving wider spiritual, social and material upliftment.[42]

Reflecting on the situation of families in North America, Browning et al have noted that, ' It is theologically, politically, and strategically important for both church and society to make the creation of a new family ethic central to their agendas.'[43] This is just as true of the Caribbean. What is being advocated moreover is for the Church to become a catalyst for the creation of such an ethic.

---

[42] Social capital refers to 'the relationships, networks and institutions based on trust that link individuals within a community and facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.' See J. Armstrong and J. Lichtenstein, *Violence and Urban Poverty in Jamaica: Breaking the Cycle* (Kingston, Jamaica: Unpublished Report, 1996), p. 26.

[43] D. Browning et al., *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), p. 3.

Two of the requirements for this to happen are a theological framework and a pastoral model such as those offered by this study. What is also required is for churches in the Caribbean to radicalise themselves by critically assessing current praxis in light of the demands of the gospel today. It will need to radically address its thinking and its teaching but even more importantly its praxis. As it seeks to develop a truly emancipatory family praxis, the Church will need to be informed by ongoing theological research in this area of pastoral theology. This will enable meaningful response to the call for a more strategic state and constructive mode of practical ministry engagement to which the Caribbean Church is now summoned.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I-A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE - ADULTS

Circle the letter next to the appropriate response

1. QUESTIONNAIRE No: _____

2. GENDER: (a) Male (b) Female

3. AREA: _____

4. AGE GROUP: (a) 13-18 (b) 19-25 (c) 26-40

5. LAST SCHOOL COMPLETED:
   (a) Below Primary
   (b) Primary
   (c) Secondary
   (d) College/University
   (e) Other (Specify)_____

6. EMPLOYMENT: (a) Self-employed
   (b) Employed by others
   (c) Unemployed

7. What do you do for a living? _____

8. FAMILY

Union Status:
(a) Single
(b) Live with baby mother/father
(c) Don't live with baby mother/father
(d) Married
(e) Other_____

9. How many children do you have: (a) None (b) 1-2 (c) 3-4
   (d) 5 or more

10. How many people including yourself live in your household:
(a) 1 (b) 2-4 (c) 5-10 (d) more than 10

11. Who is the head of the household?

(a) Myself
(b) My Mother
(c) My Father
(d) My Grandmother
(e) Grandfather
(f) Other (Specify) _____

12. The house I live in is:
(a) Owned by me
(b) Rented
(c) Other _____

13. Is the head of the household working now: (a) Yes (b) No

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

14. Are you involved in any community organisation: (a) Yes (b) No

15. I am a member of (you can tick more than one):

a.	Citizens Association	[]
b.	Neighbourhood Watch	[]
c.	Police Youth Club	[]
d.	Youth Club	[]
e.	Sports Club	[]
f.	Domino Club	[]
g.	Marching Band	[]
h.	Other community club/group	[]

16. What position, if any, do you hold? _____

CHURCH CONNECTION

17. Are you a member of a church? (a) Yes (b) No

18. If yes, which church: _____

19. How often do you attend church? (a) Never (b) Once a year

(c) Special occasions (d) Once a month (e) More than once a month

APPENDIX I-B
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE - TEENS

Circle the letter next to the appropriate response

1. QUESTIONNAIRE No: _____

2. GENDER: (a) Male (b) Female

3. AREA: _____

4. AGE GROUP: (a) 13-15 (b) 15-18 (c) 19-25

5. LAST SCHOOL COMPLETED:
(a) Below Primary (b) Primary (c) Secondary
(d) College/University (e) Other (Specify)_____

6. EMPLOYMENT: (a) Self-employed (c) Unemployed (d) Student
(b) Employed by others

7. What do you do for a living or what school do you attend? _____

FAMILY

8. Who do you presently live with? (a) Both parents (b) Mother (c) Father

(d) Boyfriend/girlfriend (e) Other_____

9. Union status of the person I live with: (a) Married (b) Living with a partner
(c) Single (d) Not applicable

10. Do you have any children? (a) Yes (b) No

11. If yes, how many children do you have: (a) 1-2 (b) 3-4
(c) 5 or more

12. How many people including yourself live in your household?
(a) 1 (b) 2-4 (c) 5-10 (d) more than 10

13. Who is the head of the household?
(a) Myself
(b) My Partner
(c) My Mother
(d) My Father
(e) My Grandmother
(f) Grandfather
(g) Other (Specify)_____

14. The house I live in is: (a) Occupied by other families

(b) Occupied only by my family (c) Other _____

15. Is the head of the household working now? (a) Yes (b) No

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

16. Are you involved in any community organisation: (a) Yes (b) No

17. I am a member of: (You can tick more than one)

a. Citizens Association []
b. Neighbourhood Watch []
c. Police Youth Club []
d. Youth Club []
e. School Club []
f. Sports Club []
g. Domino Club []
h. Marching Band []
i. Other community club/group []

18. What position, if any, do you hold?

_____

CHURCH CONNECTION

19. Are you a member of a church? (a) Yes (b) No

20. If yes, which church: _____

21. How often do you attend church? (a) Never (b) Once a year

(c) Special occasions (d) Once a month (e) More than once a month

APPENDIX II-A

TOPIC GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

DEFINING AND DESCRIBING FAMILY

1. What is a family?
2. What does family mean for you?
3. How would you describe the family you are from in terms of the:
   - Union Type
   - Quality of union
   - Number of children and their status
   - Relationship with each child
   - Composition of your household
4. How are children disciplined?

PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY

5. What are some of the different family forms you see in this community and which is the most common?
6. What is your opinion about the different types of unions and family forms found in this community?
7. What is your explanation for them?

NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF FAMILIES

8. What are some of the needs and concerns of families in this community?
9. How would you rank these in order of importance?
10. What can you or other members of your family do to have a better family life?
11. How are the needs and concerns of families being addressed in this community?

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

12. What does the Church mean to you and what do you see as its purpose?

13. How do you think God sees family and the patterns of family in this community?

14. How do you think the Church sees families in this community?

15. How do you think they should see them? How can the Church show that?

16. What are the churches in the community doing to address the needs and concerns of family?

17. What could they be doing which they are not doing?

18. What do you think helps or hinders the Church from doing what they should be doing?

APPENDIX II-B

FAMILY INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Family background
- Education
- Age

B. DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP IN YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY

- Relationship between couple
  - How you met and how the relationship developed?
  - How you feel about it now?
  - What do you want in the future?

- Relationship between parents and children

- Relationship between siblings

C. DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING IN YOUR FAMILY

- What do you enjoy?
- What do you dislike?

D. PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

- What are some of the problems your family face?

E. FAMILY SUPPORT AND THE CHURCH

- What are the current sources of help and support for your family?
- In what way, if any, has the Church or churches in this community helped to improve your family life?
- What role does the Church have in improving family life in the community?
- How can churches be more helpful and supportive to families in this community?

APPENDIX II-C

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY PASTORS

THE COMMUNITY

- How would you describe the community?
- In what ways is it similar or different from other inner-city communities?
- How do you think residents of the community perceive the Church?

FAMILY PATTERNS IN INNER CITIES

- What do you consider a family to be?
- Sociologists speak about different forms of families in Jamaica would you consider these various forms as families too?
- Sociologists also talk about union types such as visiting, common-law, legal union/marriage. How does your church see these various types of unions?
- What are the patterns of family that are most common in this community?

NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- What are some of the problems related to family that are present in the community?
- Which would you consider to be the most common, or the most crucial ones?

THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE AND RESPONSE

- What does the Church need to do in response to these challenges?
- How well do the present programmes, polices and pastoral practices of your church address some of the needs of families in the community to members and non-members?
- What do you think could be hindering the Church from carrying out its role?
- What is the present pastoral policy/practice towards common-law and other non-marital unions, membership of people in these unions, teenage pregnancy of members and others, marriage, marriage preparation and enrichment, counselling?
- Do you think churches need to be more accepting and understanding of the various forms of family in Jamaica today?
- What would you consider to be some of the theological or biblical principles that should shape how we understand and work with families in a community like this?

APPENDIX II-D

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE FOR THEOLOGIANS

FAMILY PATTERNS IN INNER CITIES

- What are some of the more pronounced patterns of family that you see in Jamaica's inner city today?
- Which of these patterns would you consider to be more prevalent or exclusively found in inner-city communities?

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

- What are some of the current trends in family life?

NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- What are some of the challenges for inner-city families?

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO THESE NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- How should these be addressed?
- What needs to happen and by whom? Which agencies? (Role of extended families; governmental-national policy; communities and community groups; schools; NGOs)

THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE AND RESPONSE

- Do you think there is a clear theology of the family in the Jamaican churches?
- To what extent do you think it is informed by the cultural realities of family?
- How well do the present pastoral policies/practices and programmes of churches respond to the needs and concerns of families in the inner city?
- What does the Church need to do in response to the needs and concerns of inner-city families?
- What theological or biblical principles might guide the pastoral practice of the Church as it seeks to respond to the needs and concerns of family in the wider community?
- What would you consider to be some of the elements of a relevant theology of the family?
- What helps or hinders the Church in carrying out this role?

APPENDIX II-E

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE FOR OTHER SELECTED SPECIALISTS

FAMILY PATTERNS IN INNER CITIES

- What are some of the more pronounced patterns of family that you see in Jamaica's inner city today?
- Which of these patterns would you consider to be more prevalent or exclusively found in inner-city communities?

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

What are some of the current trends in family life?

NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- Family around the world has been a source of much concern. What would you consider to be the challenges, needs and concerns of inner-city families?
- Which concerns would you consider to be of greater priority?

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO THESE NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- How should these be addressed?
- What needs to happen and by whom? Which agencies? (Role of extended families; government national policy; communities and community groups; schools; NGOs)

THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE AND RESPONSE

- Do you think there is a clear theology of the family in the Jamaican churches?
- To what extent do you think it is informed by the cultural realities of family?
- How well do the present pastoral policies/practices and programmes of churches respond to the needs and concerns of families in the inner city?
- What does the Church need to do in response to the needs and concerns of inner-city families?
- Are there features of the Church that could make it a suitable catalyst for inner-city family enrichment?
- What hinders the Church from being more effective in carrying out this role?
- What theological or biblical principles might guide the pastoral practice of the Church as it seeks to respond to the needs and concerns of family in the wider community?
- What would you consider to be some of the elements of a relevant theology of the family?

APPENDIX III

FOCUS GROUPS CONDUCTED IN CROSS TOWN

DURING THE PERIOD JULY –AUGUST 2001

DATES	GENDER/ AGE GROUP	TYPE	MALES	FEMALES
July 18	Females 13-18	Church		9
July 19	Males 13-18	Church	8	
July 27	Females 13-18	Community		6
July 27	Males 13-18	Community	4	
July 3	Females 19-25	Church		2
July 5	Males 19-25	Church	4	
July 24	Females 19-25	Community		7
August 7	Females 19-25	Church		4
August 8	Males 19-25	Community	5	
August 10	Males 19-25	Church	4	
July 7	Females 26-40	Church		3
July 14	Males 26-40	Church	4	
July 23	Females 26-40	Community		9
August 5	Males 26-40	Community	9	
August 9	Females 26-40	Church		7
August 13	Males 26-40	Church	8	

APPENDIX IV-A

EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF FOCUS GROUPS 13-18

COMMUNITY FEMALES 13-18

EXCERPT 1

DH
The first thing I want you to do is to draw what you think a family is.

VOICE 46
My drawing is saying that a family is a group of persons with the same blood relations, meaning you have the mother, father and the child communicating and sharing the same values, morals and the traditional things.

DH
Thank you very much. Next.

VOICE 48
Mother, father and the daughter.

DH
So for you the family is...

VOICE 48
The parents with the child living together.

DH
Okay, parents and child living together.

VOICE 49
This is a nuclear family. And a family is a group of persons living together in the same house usually related by blood. They go out and do things together, correspond with each other and so on.

DH
Living together, communicating with each other, going out together, they do things together, you are saying? So that together is an important way you use to define family.

VOICE 44
My family is a sibling family....

DH
Not necessarily your family. Tell me how you would define a family generally.

VOICE 44
A family is a group of people usually living together and related by marriage, blood relationship and adoption.

DH
What class did you learn that in?

VOICES 44
Home Economics.

EXCERPT 2

DH
You feel like you are a mistake.

VOICE 48
I don't feel like, I know. If I get 99%, my mother curses me and says that I am to get 100%.

DH
So your mother wants more of you instead of congratulating you for that.

VOICE 48
Yeah. And anything happens, it is my fault. If she loses something, she will come and curse me. This morning she loses the 'presser foot' and then she is cursing me and telling me that I must find it…

DH
The 'presser foot' is for the sewing machine?

VOICE 48
Yes.

DH
So there is a lot of anger there - both for your mother and your father. So for you, family is a very difficult experience.

VOICE 48
I do not have one. And then I tell my aunt something and she went back and told my father. **And I was going to kill myself.** (Laughter) **You think it is joke that I am making? The last time at school, I wrote in my schoolbook that I was going to kill myself. But someone found out and the Guidance Counsellor called me to her office and spoke with me.**

EXCERPT 3

DH
But you are saying that even if they are not married, they must be prepared for certain circumstances.

VOICE 46
Except for … who lives in a nuclear family, I think the rest of us were unplanned for and that is what is causing us to behave in this way. I do not think that we were planned for. **It is like we are mistakes or accident**. I think that is what really took place. The pregnancy was not planned for and this is what is happening. It is affecting our lives because our parents never wanted us in the first place and knowing that we were forced upon them. So that is what is happening. So they are saying that financial difficulty is affecting them and they are taking their frustration out on us, right now. We are bitter about it because we are feeling that we are not getting treated like we are supposed to. We are not getting the things that we want or we need, so that makes us feel bitter. We do not feel loved enough and that is what is happening to her. She is bitter about the way she is being treated in her family. I think unplanned pregnancies cause some of these things. So we are all bitter. I hate my father. She is saying that she does not like anybody in her family. These things happen because if my mother and father would sit down and say that what they never had, we can give it to our child, I would not be here right now saying that I do not like my father. I would be saying that I love my father.

DH
Because you are saying that he would have been prepared for your coming.

VOICE 46
Yes, he would have been prepared for me. Some of us who live with single parents, the parents still care for their children. But maybe because we live in the ghetto… Why must parents think that we are worse than everybody else or treat us worse than everybody else because we were never planned for?

EXCERPT 4

DH
How do you think the Church sees all the different families? People living together and are not married, some married, some are single parents, how do you think the Church sees all of that?

VOICE 46
I think the church sees single parents as being bad because if I am from a single parent family...And they give preference to that also. I have seen them treating children who have both parents and I would be there with just my mother and they would give the children with both parents preference over me. I think they view single parents on a different level because they are saying that we went against God wish. But on the other hand, God views single parents as being bad too because I never think God put us here to have a child whenever we feel pleased. **When He**

said to be fruitful and multiply, He was saying that if you are going to have a child, then ensure that the child is planned for. That means that the child would not be suffering and will not have to do things that are sinful. So you won't have to steal and wonder where you are going to get the next meal for the child. I think God was saying that we should plan for those things. That is why I think the church should do more, as teenage pregnancies on a whole, is ruining the country. And that is why they are saying that children who are from single parents are bad because they have no discipline and no one to have control over them.

DH
So that is a concern. What do you think the church should be doing to help family life improve in this community?

VOICE 45
They should walk around in the community, sit down and talk with the families.

EXCERPT 5

DH
And do you think the church has a role to play in helping family life?

CHORUS
Yes.

DH
Why?

VOICE 46
Because they can stimulate the mind, spiritually, physically and emotionally, so they have a major role - just like the family.

DH
Anybody else? Why do you think the church can help family?

VOICE 49
Because they are God's followers.

CHURCH FEMALES 13-18

EXCERPT 1

DH
I am very, very glad to have you. As I was telling the group before you came, I want us to start off by describing and defining what you feel a family is. I am going to give you five minutes to draw what you think a family is.

VOICE 15
Well, my family consists of father, mother and children. And as you can see they are smiling and they love each other.

DH
So there should be a place of happiness and a place of love; love for each other. Anybody else?

VOICE 13
My drawing is showing that the family is under one roof, who share their views and love.

DH
So the idea of them living under one roof is another thing that you are introducing here. They shared their views, so that there is again freedom of communication and you are also saying that there is love. Well, I noticed something about your drawing. Is that father and son holding hands together? And mother and daughter holding hands together?

VOICE 13
Yes.

DH
What is that signifying?

VOICE 13
Father-son relationship and mother-daughter relationship.

DH
So there is something special, or should be something special about the bond between father and son and mother and daughter…

VOICE 14
The father is here who is sick and in the hospital. The mother and daughter are visiting the father.

DH
Tell us the significance of why you choose to picture it in the hospital.

VOICE 14
Why I choose to do that? Because you know that some people cannot get along with their family so you know if one is sick, they are not going to look for him or her. So the person has to stay there until they die or get better to come back home. So there is a bond there to show love and appreciation.

DH
So for you then, the idea of showing love during times of difficulty is important. And sickness is one of those kinds of difficulty.

VOICE 14
Right.

DH
Are you ready as yet?

VOICE 19
My drawing is showing mother, father and children and all living together under one roof and sharing household chores.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Would you have wanted it another way, you think?

VOICE 16
Yes.

DH
Tell me about that?

VOICE 16
I would want a mother around me to show me things. When you have just a mother or a father around you....

VOICE 17
Some do not know how to approach a man intimately.

VOICE 18
They are not going to their father and say 'daddy, I know this man and I like him.'

DH
So it is things like that you are talking about?

VOICE 20
Also there are processes in growing up. You will hardly find a girl telling her father certain things. They are bodily functions that...

DH
Like vomiting or... (laughter)

VOICE 20
No. Like menstruating and all of that. A girl would not go to her father and tell him that she has started menstruating. She needs a mother to talk to about those kinds of things. Well, I supposed too that in today's society, you do not even need someone to tell you what to do because the society is so advanced that you do not even have to learn it at home only. You learn at school from a very early age before you really start.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Okay. What is your opinion about the different types of unions? Some people are married, some are not married. Some people live together and are not married. Some people are in visiting relationships. What is your opinion about the different kinds of unions that you see in this community?

VOICE 15
I think that when the parents are married it is better because the child/children will have two persons in their life that they can look up to, can relate to and so on. But when it is a single parent...

DH
What is that?

VOICE 14
When you have single parents, some of them are not very disciplined because it is mostly the mother and they don't have a male or a father to say that some things are not always good to do or it is not always good to go a certain place, whatever the reason.

VOICE 15
Sometimes when the child knows the parents, but the parents live at different places, it can be that when the child is with the mother, she can instil certain values and goals in the child. But when the child goes with the father, there can be something different. So the child is not going to grow up the way that he or she should.

DH
So there is an inconsistency there? One system with mummy and another system with daddy. So that can create a little confusion.

VOICE 17
When there are single parents, the children who come forth from these families, normally if you put them together, they don't interact very well. Like if they go out into the society there is always a problem when they interact with others.

VOICE 20
I tend to disagree. Take for instance…

VOICE 17
I live with my mother alone and there is high value placed on both of our lives. And if I go to a person's house and their parents are not Christians .... Well my mother is a Christian and she sees to it that she lives a life according to the Bible. But if I should go out there as a child who is living out in the world and doing as I like, then it would be difficult. In order for me to interact with the 'worldly' person, it would be so difficult. What I expect that person to do, I don't see it because they have not learned it the Bible way. They have different views, so we do not really interact.

DH
So you have different value system.

EXCERPT 4

DH
How do you think that God looks on the different kinds of family patterns that you see in the community?

VOICE 20
I think that is a very strong question. I think that is really hard to answer on how God looks on the family because when you really look at it we all know that what would be best is marrying and then having children after. But families are not always created like that.

VOICE 17
I think that God is disappointed.

DH
You think that God is disappointed.

VOICE 17
Because there is sin and the devil tempts you always. God knew that it was going to be like this but what He hoped to achieve in the beginning was, as she said - a man and a woman coming together and then having children after.

DH
What you were saying in addition to that? You whisper something a while ago, what was it that you said? You said something but I missed that. Is that the only feeling that you think God has - disappointment.

VOICE 20
It is hard to say what God is thinking. That is a challenging question.

DH
But that is exactly what I want to do. I want to challenge your thinking.

VOICE 17
When you read the Bible and how God wanted it, it is below the standard. I think that God is really disappointed.

VOICE 20
But God forgives.

VOICE 17
Because out of evil can come forth good.

EXCERPT 5

DH
What about the church? How do you think the church sees the different kinds of family?

VOICE 20
I don't think the church 'bashes' the different types of family. They have their way of seeing what a family should be, which is the Bible way, but I don't think that they have any grudge or anything bad to say.

VOICE 18
I don't think they care about the family.

DH
What do you mean by that?

VOICE 18
Because they don't really talk about anybody else's family.

DH
You mean they don't talk about families outside of the church. Is that what you are saying?

VOICE 18
Yes.

DH
So you don't get the feeling that there is genuine care?

VOICE 18
Yes.

VOICE 17
Well, I think there might be disagreements with certain types of families. **Like if the woman is a Christian and she has a child for a man and they are not married and if she is a Christian and he is the 'sinner' (unbeliever) and they are still having sexual intercourse then that would be a sin.**

VOICE 20
That would totally be an issue.

VOICE 17
Right. Because they would call that person a fornicator.

VOICE 15
But some churches don't really care.

VOICE 20
The church is going to look on a family in two different ways. **There is this lady and she is not a Christian and she has a child, there is nothing wrong with that. But if you are a Christian and you have a child outside of wedlock, then that is where the problem is.** That is where the difference comes in on the church's part because they are having the view that you should know better.

DH
So if somebody is a member of the church and she gets pregnant...

VOICE 17
Inside the church?

DH
Yes. How should the church deal with that?

VOICE 20
I think they should call a meeting and counsel the person.

DH
Call a meeting with the whole church?

CHORUS
No.

VOICE 18
For instance, your mother, father, you and your partner and they should talk about the situation and how you are going to deal with the problem.

VOICE 19
I think some churches would bring up the fact of getting married.

VOICE 17
Some churches would 'dis-fellowship' the person. They would no longer be a part of the church once that act is committed.

DH
How do you feel about that?

VOICE 19
That is bad because everybody makes mistakes.

VOICE 15
They don't have any right to run anyone out of church.

VOICE 19
You should not run anyone out of church.

VOICE 17
I don't know because it never happens in my church.

VOICE 15
Well I would prefer if they call a meeting and discuss the problem instead of doing that (that is, running them away). Because God says 'suffer the little children to come unto me.' People do make mistakes. Mistakes were made to happen.

VOICE 19
There are some cases for example, if the woman gets pregnant while in the church, she would not need anyone to tell her that she should leave the church because her conscious would bother her, so she should just leave.

DH
Does she leave the church or does she leave Christ?

VOICE 17
In certain cases, you will find her maybe going to another church that has a different aspect.

DH
But should not the church be like Christ?

CHORUS
Yes.

DH
In other words, if she is not leaving Christ, why should she have to leave church?

VOICE 18
I say that they don't have any right from running anybody away from church because maybe they might be running them away from Christ.

VOICE 20
The point of running somebody away from the church, I don't think that they should do that, because maybe they are the same ones who are doing bigger things...

VOICE 19
It is totally wrong because the Bible says, 'judge not!'

VOICE 15
The reason why some people would leave is because they already know that they have committed a sin and some of the members of the church will look down on them and 'sussing-sussing' (*constantly talking*) about them, so they would feel a way.

DH
But isn't it unfortunate that the community of Christ where we should be a community of forgiveness have to create that feeling where people feel like they cannot be comfortable so they have to go. Anyway, what about the situation where a man and a woman are living together. They have three children and they live together for seven years. The woman comes to the altar because she has accepted the Lord and wants to get baptised and be a member of the church and the man is not yet ready for marriage. He is not dealing with any other woman and he is faithful to her. He takes care of the children and he is a good provider for the children. And she comes to the altar out of a genuine desire. How do we deal with that one?

VOICE 20
It is ironic because in that case, the person is going to be baptised and the person is going to continue living with that partner and it is not going to be deemed as wrong because they are now a couple. So whether she is a Christian, she still can do whatever because they are now a couple.

VOICE 17
They are married?

VOICE 20
Yes, they are married.

VOICE 17
Oh, it's different...He is talking about if they are not married.

DH
They are living together but they are not legally married.

VOICE 20
They are not married?

VOICE 18
It would be hard because she is going to be a Christian and the husband is not a Christian.

VOICE 17
There would be some hindrances for her because the man is not married to her, so he is not really hers. And maybe how she really wants to go out in the Lord, she might see this man as stopping her. Maybe she sees something in the Lord more than what she sees in the man. Maybe she should leave him. The church, on a whole, would say either you get married before you can fully turn your life over the Lord. And if the man says no and the woman really needs to accept the Lord, then she should leave him in spite of the three children that they have.

DH
So she leaves him, takes the children...

VOICE 17
Or if the children want to go with the father.

DH
And the children go to the father and they say, ' but mummy we have live together for seven years.' The children are five, another one is three and another two…

VOICE 14
Well since they live together for so long, why can't the father just married to her?

VOICE 17
Well supposed he does not want to marry her.

VOICE 19
Well that is where the church comes in. They should get help from the church with the financial aspect.

VOICE 20
But why wouldn't he want to get married?

VOICE 17
After he has three children...

VOICE 19
Well, that means he does not love her.

DH
Is that a situation that you ever see yet?

VOICE 17
Yes.

DH
Well, I don't know why it happens but it happens. In other words, I don't know why the man feels he cannot marry to her but it happens so often.

VOICE 17
(Gave an illustration of a lady who came to the altar and wanted to accept the Lord but she did not as she was not prepared to give up her man. Now the man is in jail and the lady is feeling guilty that she gave up the Lord for the man and the man has no use to her anymore because he is in jail.)

DH
That might be different but in a case where you have a family there already, is it fair that she has to choose between God and her family?

VOICE 17
Yes, I think so. Because God is jealous and He always come first.

DH
But if God loves the family and He knows that these two people have started a family and they have been trying their best with their family, don't you think that God is interested in the health of that family as well as her soul?

VOICE 19
But with the man and the lady living together and having children, that is not really a real family because normally a family is described as coming together by marriage, by law or by birth or by adoption. But the man and the woman are not connected in any way, so I don't see that as the family.

DH
So we are going back on all that was said earlier in the discussion. So all of those other families who are not married are not families.

VOICE 19
I don't see it as a family.

VOICE 17
It is a family.

VOICE 20
That is very interesting. But when I look at my mother and myself, we are still a family.

VOICE 19
But the man and the woman living together...

VOICE 20
It does not matter because they are a family.

COMMUNITY MALES 13-18

EXCERPT 1

DH
So you are talking about man-woman relationships. So you can say trust between man and woman.

VOICE 54
Yeah. And you can say between the children and the parents.

VOICE 53
Because sometimes the mothers will say that they soon come back and then they are gone off to foreign (*overseas*) leaving the child.

DAVE
So you would say a similar thing between parents and children also - where you cannot trust the words of parents. They say they are going to do one thing and it does not really come through.

VOICE 53
It is the complete opposite.

CHURCH MALES 13-18

EXCERPT 1

DH
Well, as you can see, my name is DH and I will be your captain for today, just guiding our discussion. I want you to draw for me, what in your opinion is a family. Will you go first and explain your drawing.

VOICE 68
I have a house with a scenery of mummy, daddy and the children. I also have a next scenery of the father and the son talking. In the first scene, the father is there to share joy and happiness with mummy and the children and to fill that gap. And when the father is not there, they feel lonely. Not that mummy does not show them love, but when a father is there, it brings in an extra love. In the second scene, it shows that a father and a son can talk because it is good when the son can run to the father. For example, the son will not tell his mother that he loves a girl and that he is having some problems but he will need a father that he can share with and the father can give him certain advice.

EXCERPT 2

DH
And when you say that you do not want to be like your father, in what ways are you referring? In what way you do not want to be like him?

VOICE 27
I don't want to have many children… and if I live in a community, I do not want to sleep with every lady in that community. One child is enough.

VOICE 26
I don't want to grow up and have children all over the place. I want to grow up and be a father and to be there for my children. If my children have a problem, I want them to sit down and tell me and I can just tell them what to do and so on. I want to share conversation like a father to a friend.

DH
So you want to be there for your children?

VOICE 25
I love to be like my father because my father sets a good example and he plays a good role in the family. And if you need someone to talk to and play with (as I don't play with my brother), it is always with my daddy. He is always there for me. Any little problem I have, I can go to him. With my mother I can also go to her with any problem too. But I always go to my daddy with most of my problems. I remembered he had to go to a meeting and he was even late for the meeting because I had something to tell him.

DH
You feel he gives you priority and attention.

VOICE 25
Yes.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Tell me, how do you think God sees the different families that are in this community?

VOICE 51
I think He sees all of us as one unit. If you go to some churches and you do not have any money, then it's like you're ...but God does not do that. **But He sees us as one whether we have money or not**. (Gave the example of the woman who was caught in adultery.) Jesus was showing her love.

DH
And He respected her. And you feel that is the same way God looks at the different people from different kinds of family.

VOICE 51
Yes.

APPENDIX IV-B
EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF FOCUS GROUPS 19- 25

COMMUNITY FEMALES 19-25

EXCERPT 1

VOICE 43
I have known cases where you have one "don" for the area and he will have five women in the area and all five women have children for him. And the five of them will have to live good.

VOICE 38
We call them 'studs, **sperm donators'**. And then the man will have the women in the same community. A man will move around to different women for a limited time but the women will have to make sure that a baby is born to that man. Some men believe that the more children you have, the more of a man he is.

DH
Now what makes that man attractive to a woman?

VOICE 41
We don't know.

DH
Because presumably there is something about a man like that, that a woman finds attractive.

VOICE 39
Well, maybe it is not the fact that he has the other women but maybe how the person is. Some women find that they like cute guys, some women like guys who are the 'dressy' type and so on, so I guess maybe that's what really attracts them.

EXCERPT 2

DH
So you dream about that. But for you having a child does not require that you be in a steady relationship with a man? Suppose you decide that the time comes when you want to have your child, would you feel that you would want to have a steady relationship with somebody?

VOICE 39
At one point, I used to think that **it does not matter if I have a husband as long as I have a child. I am the sort of person that always thinks ahead. And I want to be rich, and so I just want to know that I can support my child. It doesn't matter to**

me wherever the father is. Because I don't want to live and don't have a child, as I want to have a child of course. I want to see that I can produce something and I want to see what I can produce. It does not really matter about the father. Not that I do not want to get married, as I would love to get married.

DH
But you don't automatically think - me, father then child.

VOICE 39
No.

DH
The desire for a bond with a child is more important than even a desire for a bond with a man. Would you agree with that?

VOICE 39
Right.

VOICE 43
Not with some people. Like me for instance, I want to get married. And if you intend to get married and have a child or children, I believe that you should get to know the kind of man that you want to have the children for. Find out if he will be a good enough father for your children even if he is not going to be a part of my life. Find out if he is a sensitive person enough and if he would be as loving, as dedicated, as you would want him to be to the child even if he is not paying you any attention at all.

CHURCH FEMALES 19-25

EXCERPT 1

DH
What does family mean for you?

VOICE 1
For me? (*Chuckles*). Just as I drew it, that's how it is for me.

DH
When I say what it means for you, is it something that you think is very important for you or something that is not so important. It's a big thing or just one of those things...

VOICE 1
I think it plays a good role on your life; it has a great impact on your life. Because how you grow up, it will tell the type of person you are going to turn out to be.

DH
And you feel family influences that a bit?

VOICE 1
Yes.

DH
What about you?

VOICE 2
I think families should be ordained by God and really family is very important. It's good when you can communicate, as communication is one of the greatest things in a family. And that's what I see family as. You have someone who you can communicate with, relate to and so forth.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Are you closer to some than others? Or are there some that you have never lived with but you just know it is your brother or your sister.

VOICE 1
For me, yes. And I know that some of them are my brothers and sisters but I have never lived with them. **But I have a half sister, who is for my father and I am closer to her than I am close to my mother or any other person.**

DH
And she lives with you in the same house.?

VOICE 1
No, she lives in Montego-Bay.

DH
Did you use to live together at some stage?

VOICE 1
No. Sometimes on holidays, I will go to her house and we will stay together.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Let's talk a little about that setting there, what do you think cause that? This is very common right across Jamaica and in fact, very common right across the Caribbean. What do you think cause those forms of family to be so common?

VOICE 2
I don't know. **I really think that most males think that they should be sperm donators**. That's how I see them. Because from once they have a child they move on to a next lady, and have a next child out there. And that's what they need to stop. Think about not being a sperm donator but being a father to that child. We are in modern technology and there are many things that can prevent pregnancies and so they should have some family planning. But I think many of the males look at the females as their handbags. Some males do not respect the females and they see females as something in skirts that they can get.

DH
Like you go to the market and pick up some fruits.

VOICE 2
It's like a diaper that they can change.

DH
Interesting. Very descriptive words there. So you are saying that these forms of family have a lot to do with the attitudes of men.

EXCERPT 4

VOICE 2
For me, at first I resented the two outside children. I accepted my mother's six children including myself plus my sister who is half, she is for another father and she is the last one. I accepted her but I resented the other two children outside because I always see them as the barrier. They are the problem for the breaking down of my family. Although looking back now, they weren't because actually my older sister (from outside) was born the same month like my brother and in the same year, so it was going on before. But I really resented them, not knowing... At times, I don't think I've ever resented my father but more the other woman outside.

DH
Like she is stealing your father.

VOICE 2
(Chuckles) Right. At first I never understand it and we were living together but even then we were not close. Although they were outside we lived together for some years but we weren't close. But after leaving high school, growing up and I met the Lord, then it's like I am seeing.... I started praying for my family and I started seeing this bond between us. The two outside children and my brothers are close. But I am the only girl and I resented them from outside. And now we are really seeing where we are coming together. We talk and whenever I wanted anything from my father, I could call him to tell him. We are always saying the same thing about him.

DH
About your father?

VOICE 2
Yeah. We are always agreeing on the same things like he is not responsible and we always tell him. We defend each other and we are much closer now over the past two years. And even moreso within the last month, we are even closer. Each day it seems we are getting closer. But I always dream, even though they are outside.....But the time that we had spent together, I really resented that. I never really tried to know them that time. I wanted to live with everybody even those from the outside. I really wanted it to be a family even though we are already separated, I wanted to live with them but it's too late now, as everybody is getting older and have their own spouse and so forth. But I really wanted us to get together and share things that brothers and sisters do. Really to have that bond. I think for now I've accepted it. I really have the bond with my brothers. I am close to my brothers, very close. We share things although they are abroad. Two are abroad and the one that I am most close to, he is also abroad, but I really share a lot of things with him. I can talk with him whenever I am having problems. He's my advisor.

DH
And you still keep that close?

VOICE 2
If we still keep that close? He is abroad and the phone bills are expensive. But we are still close and run jokes with each other. Yeah, we are still close. And I am even getting closer to my sister who is outside.

DH
Which was one of the ones that you feel a way about?

VOICE 2
I am really getting closer to her and I really understand that they are not really the problem. And I don't really blame my father because he never understood what he was doing. Even though his father was like that, had a lot of **patchwork,** but my father only have two different families. My father's father had a lot of patchwork. My family is very big. I don't even know some of them.

DH
When you say patchwork, what do you mean?

VOICE 2
(*Chuckles)* Different females, like a man having three different females so it's called patchwork.

EXCERPT 5

DH
Tell me about your family?

VOICE 56
Well I did not grow up with my family much. I spent ten years with my mother and father. I have two sisters and two brothers. My parents got separated when I was about age ten or so.

DH
They had been married?

VOICE 56
Yes, they were married. Now, they are separated. But when we were together, we were quite a happy family, apart from my father who was very abusive.

DH
When you say abusive, what do you mean?

VOICE 56
He would batter bruise my mother. He was very abusive. He did not work. He was a control freak. I remembered when my mother left, I was the happiest person you could find. You know, you always hear that when parents separate, it does something to the child. Actually that really made me happy. I was happy to see her not come

home. I wasn't living there at the time when she left anyway. I was with somebody else who is now my guardian and whom I have been living with for over twelve years. So that is basically my family for that period.

DH
That is, your guardian?

VOICE 56
Yes.

DH
What relation is your guardian to your mother?

VOICE 56
Nothing at all.

DH
Friend? How did she become your guardian?

VOICE 56
She just liked me. And when her husband died, I was very young and she used to help me out with lunch money to go to school because my parents could not afford it. And when her husband died, I would go over and help as she was the only one there. Eventually, she kept me and sent me to school and I am there. However, it was a very good thing. But still the family love, the blood family love that one would share or one would have, I did not have that because I always felt that I was on the outside. Like I was an outcast in some ways. I wasn't treated with impunity or anything like that but you just know when you are not blood, you are not family.

DH
So you felt, in some ways, that you were a loner.

VOICE 56
Yes, I was a loner. **Basically my family were my friends. Basically, the people who I feel loved by most are my friends and they are who I consider to be my family.**

DH
You are saying something very important about what your perspective of family - that family is a place where you are loved.

VOICE 56
You feel wanted and all of that.

COMMUNITY MALES 19-25

EXCERPT 1

DH
What does family mean to you? When I say that, I mean what would you say is the purpose of a family? What purpose does a family serve?

VOICE 72
To guide you in a certain way.

DH
To guide you.

VOICE 72
Yes. To see that you grow in the right way.

DH
So in a way to guide you between right and wrong.

VOICE 72
So that you come to something decent.

DH
So that you become someone decent.

VOICE 73
So you will have responsibility and to teach you responsibility.

DH
Teach you responsibility.

VOICE 73
And show (have) examples for the experiences. For example, with the bad experiences the younger ones will come and realise and therefore would not make the same mistakes.

DH
So it is like in the family that we are supposed to learn examples.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Would you say that most men have more than one woman?

VOICE 71
Yes.

VOICE 70
90 per cent

DH
Would you say most women expect that a man will have more than one woman?

VOICE 71
Yeah…Most know still.

VOICE 70
Most of them like when you protect yourself, that you do not give them anything. So they are alright with you once you are showing them that you rate (*respect*) them.

DH
But they want you to tell them or they don't want to know. How do you deal with it? They want you to be up-front with it?

VOICE 70
No man.

EXCERPT 3

VOICE 71
Well, my father has seven children for six women.

DH
So you would want to follow that track too?

VOICE 71
What are you saying man?

VOICE 69
Plant your seeds all about.

VOICE 71
I would like to be like Bob Marley.

DH
When you say that, what do you mean?

VOICE 71
I would not mind having as much children as possible.

EXCERPT 4

VOICE 70
When you do not have a youth (*child*), you move more like a boy no matter how old you are. Because you do not have that great responsibility. But when you have a youth to take care of, then you will know that certain things have to be done.

VOICE 72
You have to work.

VOICE 70
In order for your youth to be secured.

DH
But how is that going to work. Let's say he has his football team with eleven different women and he would really like to take care of each of them but how those two things are going to work? How are you going to have eleven and still....

VOICE 71
No matter how much children you have still, it is the way you take care of them. All of them can feel like that they are the most loved ones still depending on how you deal with them. They don't have to live with you or anything like that. It's just how you deal with them.

DH
So they do not have to be with you for them to feel that they are loved by a father.

VOICE 71
It is not just about material things, you know, but you have to show them love.

EXCERPT 5

VOICE 72
It is going to cause confusion because I am not going to stay with one woman. And that is like cheating. So it is best if I stay single and go on and run around. But if I get married and run around with other girls, then I am risking my wife's life and all kinds of thing. And I do not feel that is really right.

DH
So if you were married to a woman, you would want to deal with her alone.

VOICE 72
Yeah. Anytime I plan to get married, then it is just she one. **That is why I am not going to run into it. I will wait until I reach in an age and it is settling down time. Not right now.**

EXCERPT 6

DH
So if you find a woman that you want to marry to, you will just deal with her.

VOICE 69
Yes, but I have to make sure that it is the right woman and one that will not disrespect me nor me disrespect her.

VOICE 72
What I am saying now is that - if you say you are following your father, all of your brothers and sisters, are they for one woman from your father?

VOICE 69
My father got married twice. He married to a woman and she has four children. And then he met my mother and they have my sister and me. I am the last child, 'wash-belly' out of all of them. But I want to live like my father.

DH
Live like your father, in what way though? He is married now and is with one woman?

VOICE 69
Because he was a big, respectable man. He was a businessman and a lot of people look up to him. He was very loved still.

DH
So you would say that marriage is a thing you would do for respectability or is it the respectable thing to do. Is that what you are saying?

VOICE 69
Not necessarily.

VOICE 72
It is a respectable thing to do.

CHURCH MALES 19-25

EXCERPT 1

DH
Do you find that people still live together without being legally married for a long time? Does that still happen?

VOICE 4
I can speak for my family. They have been together for 18 years.

DH
That's your mother and your father?

VOICE 4
Yes. 18 years and they are not married and they are not in love. **But I can say that the reason why the family is still together is because of me and I think my success. They are saying that they want to see me reach a certain thing in life and without one present maybe I cannot achieve it because my father hold a stronger job than my mother**. He believes that his money is more valuable to my education process because she cannot send me to university because of the small amount of money that she has. And with him not being there, he is not going to take full responsibility for me. Because he is going to say that she is going to find another man. So he is staying around just because of me, not for her and the sake of a family.

DH
How does that make you feel?

VOICE 4
Kind of good in a sense but I need to see love within the family. Growing up every day you hear them fussing and fighting. And going to school my brain is so occupied thinking about what I am going home to hear them fussing about. Sometimes, they throw me off from doing work and I have sought counselling from my pastor. He spoke to them about it, things cooled down for a while and it has started again. So I guess this is something that I should live with, but I find a way of dealing with the problems. For example, when I am having exams, I don't stay there. I go out and stay with my friends and deal with my own issues because I guess it's my future so why should I allow them to take it away? And they want me to achieve so I find my own resolution for that.

EXCERPT 2

DH
First of all, thank you for agreeing to come and to be a part of the discussion. I hope that you will find the discussion helpful. I want you to give me in your opinion a description of what is a family.

VOICE 84
To me, a family is like a group of people that should be there for one another, helping, loving each other day by day.

VOICE 83
Just to add to what was said, I think a family is a group of people living together, not basically under one roof, but working together to achieve certain goals within the household.

DH
So you are saying that they do not have to live together?

VOICE 83
No, they do not have to be in a single place at any time.

DH
But they must be connected in some way.

VOICE 83
Yes.

DH
For you, what does family mean? In other words, what is the significance of family for you? What is the purpose of family?

VOICE 83
That is a good question.

VOICE 84
In today's world, there are two types of people. There are friends and family. Friends will not do certain things that family members will do.

DH
Like what?

VOICE 84
You will feel comfortable going to a family member to tell that person certain things more than going to a friend. So a family means more to me than anything because I can feel free to go to them. And I can trust them so that if I say something they can keep it into the family and not go outside of the family.

DH
So it should be a place where confidentiality can be maintained and you can say something that you would not have said to anybody else.

VOICE 84
And you can send love and receive love right there with a lot of meaning following it.

VOICE 83
But then again family can be considered as your real, close set of friends. You can have a group of people and they can be like family because we have been through a lot, we share a lot and it is like we go through a lot together. So basically when you get close, you feel comfortable talking to them, showing them certain things and there is a form of trust and love that have been built up. They have your back and you have theirs. Their battle is your own.

DH
So you are saying that in a sense, there can actually be a way in which you consider your friends as a family.

APPENDIX IV-C
EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF FOCUS GROUPS 26-40

COMMUNITY FEMALES 26-40

EXCERPT 1

DH
Let us carry this discussion a little further along and ask - what does family mean for you? What is the purpose of family?

VOICE 32
Family is not just mother, father, sister, and brother. Family is a community.

DH
So for you, you extend it even beyond mother, father, sister, and brother. It is not just sibling. Tell me why you include outsiders in that?

VOICE 32
Growing up, I was taught that if I did something wrong, it is not only for my mother and father to discipline me, but it is anyone that caught me doing that wrong. So it was not only mother, father, or auntie and uncle. It is an entire community.

VOICE 28
I agree.

DH
There is an African proverb that says, it takes a village to raise a child.

VOICE 28
I have a daughter who is thirteen years old and anybody who knows me can tell you that if my daughter goes outside on the road and she does something that is out of order or out of place, and you see and you didn't correct her and I know you knew, then I am going to penalise you first before I penalise the child. Because as an adult, I think that you should correct her right there and then. And I know that it is not only her mother and father who can grow her but other adults. **I don't know how people nowadays look at it and say that they don't want anybody to correct their child, just to leave them alone. I don't believe in that because I cannot raise my child on my own.**

DH
I was going to ask you if many people feel that way? There are some people nowadays who feel another way.

VOICE 33
I don't like that because sometimes they abuse the child. Some just slap a child because they think that can solve things.

VOICE 35
Exactly. Or they use abusive words.

EXCERPT 2

DH
When you see the families around the community, what would you consider to be some of the needs that families have? What are some of the problems that families have, some of the concerns?

VOICE 28
They need education and jobs.

VOICE 31
They need love and communication.

DH
When you say communication, what...

VOICE 28
First and foremost they need a religious background.

DH
Are you just saying that because I am a Minister?

VOICE 28
They need a religious background.

VOICE 34
What I see is, if most people have that, they would not behave the way they behave.

VOICE 32
You think so?

VOICE 35
If you know the background.... Some of them are shooting and yet they go to church more than me.

VOICE 32
I know that some boys growing up in a religious family, they are the ones that fire the guns. But because people think they are honest and good serving persons, they say that they are not doing that and they can trust him to go down the road but yet you are not down the road with him.

VOICE 28
Another problem is that growing up as children especially in a single family home, what happens is that the parents with the children, send them out to church while the parents stay home.

VOICE 34
That is another part of the problem.

VOICE 36
I do not think that the religious background has anything to do with what they are doing now. Because I have a nephew who grew up with us, and my grandmother is a Christian and my mother is a Christian, and his dad is still a Christian. And most of us in our family that he knows and he talks to are Christians. They talk to him every day from he was small and he still got himself into trouble.

VOICE 34
We should not even put it as religious background. **They need to have a sense of who God is**. I understand what you are saying but you know what I noticed with most of them....When I just came into Kingston in the 1970s, I noticed that most of the boys who police always killed like every weekend, their parents, some of them are deacons and pastors, but what is the problem was that most of those persons, they go to church in the nights and leave them at home. So they have all the time to do whatever they have to do while their parents were in church. The only time that they would go to church is on a Sunday morning, which is a regular thing. It is the norm, you go and sing some songs and then you come home back. But during the week, the parents are gone to church and leave them at home.

VOICE 32
And parents are saying that they are honest. And if somebody says to them 'you know your son did that last night.' And when the parents go to their son and ask them, they would say no and the parents believe them. And yet they did.

VOICE 31
You must never say that my child will never do that. Don't always swear for your children.

CHURCH FEMALES 26-40

EXCERPT 1

DH
If you were to look at that first question there - what is a family, how would you describe it? What would you say a family is?

VOICE 2
To me, a family is a group of people living together, working together for a common bond with each other.

DH
Living together, working together, having something in common. Anything else?

VOICE 3
I would say the same thing.

DH
You would agree to that too.

VOICE 1
I would agree with her in terms of having one common goal. Oftentimes, people don't see eye to eye but at least it should be for the greater good of all concerned. Decisions that are made by these groups of person should benefit everybody. So it is a group of person.... **Not quite sure if they have to live together because sometimes you have family who are abroad, members, and they still have an input, a strong input whether monetary or in terms of advise but it is still a family.** So I am not quite sure if they have to live together but certainly working together for the benefit of all in the family.

DH
Let me hear from you - who do you think make up a family?

VOICE 1
It's a tough one. I guess because you know that there are so many different family types.

VOICE 3
A group of people that make up the family?

DH
Yes but I would like to know who you consider to be those people who make up the family. Do they have to be related by blood?

VOICE 3
No, they don't have to be related. It can be your friends

VOICE 1
I guess there will have to be someone who is, kind of, in charge. There must be somebody that others look up to also. And as she said, they don't have to be related by blood.

VOICE 3
Or somebody with whom you associate.

DH
There must be some association you think?

VOICE 2
Yes because I have many friends who I call family. I have friends that my daughters call aunties, uncles. They become such close friends that we feel like family to them.

DH
So again the closeness of the association gives that sense of...

VOICE 2
Feel of a family.

EXCERPT 2

VOICE 75
I think a family should be one that can communicate with each other, should be loving, should have time to share with the children, read to them, tell them stories, go to church and do little things together.

DH
And who should do that? Who comprises the family for you?

VOICE 75
Father and the mother. Mother and father should do both those things.

DH
So mother and father make up the family you are saying?

VOICE 75
Yes, along with the children.

DH
Anybody else?

VOICE 76
I would say a family is like a group of people comprising mother, father, children and you have the extended one like the grandparents. That comprises a family for me.

DH
Anybody else? What is a family?

VOICE 78
People that come together and become mother, father and children. And persons that try to live in peace and harmony and do things together.

COMMUNITY MALES 26-40

EXCERPT 1

DH
What would you say a family is?

VOICE 61
A family is a group of people who should come together and live loving, help one another. And they can adopt which is the next thing with a family.

DH
So it is not necessarily blood connection.

VOICE 61
I have it in my mind that I can adopt someone because somebody adopted me when I was growing up. They kept me at the home, grew me and sent me to school.

DH
And that became your family as far as you were concerned?

VOICE 61
Yes.

DH
Anybody else?

VOICE 64
According to what I have heard said that a family is loving but you will not find a family with pure love. **Because at no time at all in this world, that everything will run smooth. You will have ups and downs but you have to have a head in the family who is respectful. So in the family, you have to have an elder to get things going in the unit.**

EXCERPT 2

DH
It gives you direction and it gives guidance. And a family helps to give a purpose.

VOICE 64
So the children that you have, you have to deal with them and make them understand that you are the father and the head of the house. So you have to set the foundation for them. Most times you set the foundation, but the children stray. But my daughter is my family and if it were not she, maybe I would stray.

DH
So it gives you a motivation to set an example for her.

VOICE 64
I have to get a job that certain things you can cover like school. School is one of the greatest things that you can ever achieve because that is where you learn. So I have to make sure that she gets that part right by going to school. With family, you have to put out the effort. You can't just sit down and say that you have family as that will not work but you have to put out the effort.

VOICE 60
The father has the most important role in the family, no matter how they say it is the mother. True, the mother brought you into the world. I grew with my father and stepmother. **My father treated my sisters and the other brother better than me.** So I grow with a thing to know that I won't allow that to happen to my children. So I am growing myself in a way to treat my youths (*children*) different than how my father treated me. So it's like he has taught me a thing but he has not known that yet.

DH
Indirectly, he has taught you something.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Do you find people still interested in marriage in this community?

VOICE 60
Some girls would say that marriage a pose (*a fad*), but in my situation it is a long time my lady and me should marry. It was nothing big but to show it was a bond.

VOICE 64
At my age now, **I don't feel that I should marry to a woman and she does not have a child for me.** That is how I feel because the child plays a lot in it, you know. It is a bond. And if a man gets married and there is no child, it seems like there is nothing in there to hold except to say that you love each other and anybody can say that they love. But when you have something to look back on, then you can say this woman gave me a nice daughter.

VOICE 60
My mother got married in January and divorced in December, because she did not know the man so well. She got a man where every morning she woke up, she got her breakfast in bed. So she kept on saying that this is a good man. But I said to her that she could not marry the man on that basis alone, as she does not know him. Because that is the way we discuss things in our family. And when she asked us, we told her that it was too early because she did not know the man, and not because he is giving her breakfast in bed. And when she checked it out, the man is a freak. And we told her that she should know the man more. If after two years, then she should be with him and by that time she can know what is going on.

EXCERPT 4

DH
They want to emphasise on the judgement rather than the love.

CHORUS
Yes.

VOICE 59
The churches do not tend to deal with the realities that are here. Is like they are putting off their life to the life after. That is why I think they are not involved in more social things because they keep on just dealing with the spiritual things. And they say that they are waiting until they reach heaven, while we still have to live while we are on earth.

CHURCH MALES 26-40

EXCERPT 1

DH
Just from what you are saying too, there is a sense in which every child represents a promise or a possibility of something. And that the family becomes one way in which that promise eventually comes to fruition. And that your family experience in a sense can either make you accomplish your full potential or make you not accomplish your full potential. In some ways, your family can influence that. Would you agree with that?

VOICE 12
Yes.

DH
Anything else? Any other meaning you put to family?

VOICE 11
I am more on the learning side. When I was growing up, I never see a father, only a mother. When I was about three years old ...I don't quite remember but I was told by my uncles and aunts that my mother and father had divorced. **My father is an ignorant man and even right now I am very afraid of him. My father lived in the same community but I was so afraid of him because he used to beat my mother. My mother was in the country and even when I was there, my mother had to leave me with my grandfather and grandmother. Eventually she died, she passed away. So my grandfather was there as well as my uncles and aunts. I believe that sometimes I got some bad treatment.**

DH
From your uncle and aunt?

VOICE 11
Yes. They beat me sometimes for nothing at all. I always wanted to move out to go and live with my grandmother. But where she was living, she had her brothers and sisters and she was saying that she would not have any space for me because the place is small and there were two girls and a boy who were already there. So I had to stay with my grandfather.

APPENDIX V

EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH CASE FAMILIES

CASE FAMILY 1

EXCERPT 1

DH
How do you feel about Tom's children?

DORIS
I don't feel any way.

TOM
She (*his daughter*) is one hundred per cent like hers.

DORIS
Is like mine. I just enjoy children. The children at my workplace always tell me "Doris take them home because you are their mother, you are everything for them." If I am not there for a day is like they don't eat, they don't want to sleep because they want Doris and they call Doris. And it's the same thing with his daughter. When she comes here, she does not want to leave. She came back from the country and she called the minute she came home. She wanted to come down. I just love children and it doesn't matter wherever they come from. Even when I am coming home if I buy something for my children, sometimes I have to buy something extra because when I am coming through the gate there are many children there waiting on me. As long as I have the money I buy so they can laugh and play with my children and they don't have to beg because they are comfortable. So I treat his child like she is mine.

DH
Some people would get into a little friction (*disagreement*) sometimes if they know that he has to go around there or have any dealings with the other baby-mothers.

DORIS
I always tell him that I don't like it but I tell myself that it is his baby-mothers and I have baby-fathers out there and I have to communicate with them sometimes and if I have to do that, well I know he has to do it. And all I tell myself is that he has to do it, he just has to do it and I have to adjust myself to the situation. It might take time but I still have to adjust to the situation. Everybody has feelings so… you know… sometimes it not easy for me.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Here you are now you are in a relationship with each other. Tom what do you think you would like from this relationship in the future?

TOM
Well basically is for this relationship to go further, **we will settle down, get married, have our family together. I can go for my kids so they can stay around me and everybody is here as a family.**

DH
You think about the possibility of getting married in the future and having all the children together. In how you relate to Doris, what do you think is necessary for the relationship to build to that stage?

TOM
Well it is building because she doesn't try to upset me, she tries to keep me comfortable at all times so those things grow my interest more and push me more faster to it.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Did you ever think that you would have six children?

DORIS
No and I always tell myself that I am going to stop and eventually I find myself pregnant again.

DH
Were any of them that you said I want to get pregnant and I am going to plan to get pregnant?

DORIS
My first daughter. **The way my mother was treating me, I said I wanted somebody to love me. I wanted to love and for someone to love me back and even though I tried getting it from the guy I was talking to, I never got it**...Everything I get I would always give it to him and he never even said thanks but I always told myself that he would eventually come around. He will eventually realize that I am trying hard enough so he will try back; but it never happened. Then she grew up and started to love me, even after I had my first son, she was there for me like a big girl. So I tell myself I will have children then.

EXCERPT 4

DH
You see they are all competing for your attention.

DORIS
Right, more so they are fighting and then again another person is there and they don't want him to win. They want to be the winners.

DH
They want to get all of you?

DORIS
Yes. Each of them, even the baby, wants to get close to me than the next one. **They want mummy to love them more because there is no daddy to love them or to share equally.** But sometimes they will go to Tom and tell him little problems. But I am hoping and praying that they will come around to him in the sense that they will understand that he is their father now. And whenever they have a little problem, when I am not here, they can go to him and they will trust him enough and gain his confidence so that they can go to him sometimes and have both sides so that I won't have to be all in one.

CASE FAMILY 2

EXCERPT 1

BETTY
Well I had three boys but the three of them die.

DH
Tell me about that?

BETTY
Well one was killed by the police when he was nineteen. The second one, he was a twin, died when he was nineteen too and the other twin died when he was thirty-one.

DH
So the twin that died at nineteen and the one that died at thirty-one, how did they die?

BETTY
By the gun.

DH
So you have lost three sons by the gun. **That must have been very difficult for you**. (Pause). So you have three sons and a daughter and all three of them have gone. What was it like bringing up those boys and Marie? Did they all grow up in this community?

BETTY
Part of the time when they were much smaller my mother grew them. When they got a little bigger, I took them from my mother and grew them.

EXCERPT 2

MARIE
My father started having a lot of women. Then I don't know if it's the women that influence him or just the way how he is, but certain things that use to happen in the house stop happening.

DH
What do you mean?

MARIE
Like when he was coming home, he would always carry little things like two brassieres for his wife or two pants for the daughter or a jar of ice cream. Then that stopped and life started to get miserable. So life was not all that happy again. Until he moved out and went to live with one of them. **Then life got sour, because if I wanted to see him I had to go to his workplace. Money wouldn't come home again and all of that.**

EXCERPT 3

DH
Then how long you were together before you got pregnant?

MARIE
A couple months.

DH
So it wasn't even a full year?

MARIE
No. So I had to drop out of school.

DH
How did you feel about that?

MARIE
Bad, because I felt that…well I know that if I did not drop out of school, life would be much better today.

DH
In what way you think?

MARIE
In every way because I wouldn't have three of them (*She chuckles with embarrassment*). Not that I am sorry that I have them, but I wouldn't have three of them?

EXCERPT 4

DH
Do you wonder sometimes what difference it would make if a father was around them?

MARIE
Well sometimes especially with M…. **Because when he is with his father he is well behaved, he gives no trouble but he gives me all the trouble.** So I always ask him if he takes me for an idiot. Because when he is with his father he says he gives no trouble; he does not even have to talk to him. Because sometimes I will call his father and ask him to come and talk to his son. I will talk to him and let him talk to his father and his father will talk to him and will say to me "how he gives you so much trouble and when he is with me he doesn't give me any trouble." So **I know if he had a father, it would be different for him**. The other son now doesn't fully understand when he sees his father. He will say daddy because he is happy to see him.

DH
But he doesn't really have a bond with him.

MARIE
Yes. With my daughter, whenever her father is in Jamaica, she does not remember me.

EXCERPT 5

DH
Have you ever thought about getting married?

MARIE
Yes man, all the while.

DH
Would you like to get married?

BETTY
When she was much smaller, **Marie had always said she would be married by twenty-five.**

MARIE
Before I started talking to my son's father I used to talk to this guy and after I had my first son, he came to me and asked me "Marie you would get married to me?" When I came home and told my mother and some bigger cousins, they said I was too young as I wasn't ready for that yet. So that never really… Afterwards I just said no. Because I told myself since they are older than me, they have more experience in those things; so I listened to them.

EXCERPT 6

DH
Let me come to the church now, how do you see the church in this community? How do you feel about the church? How do the churches in this community operate?

MARIE
There are a lot of different churches in this community. **If the churches came together things would be better, but it makes no sense - as this church is here doing a little thing and another church over there doing something else.** The whole twenty-two of them doing twenty- two different things; they should just combine together. The pastors should sit together from time to time and discuss certain things and come together and link their ideas together and make them become one.

APPENDIX VI

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED DURING THE PERIOD MAY 2001 TO SEPTEMBER 2001, IN JAMAICA

CATEGORY	NAME	PROFESSION/ OCCUPATION	GENDER	DATE	PLACE
Community Pastors	CP 1	Pastor Church of God	Male	June 26	Kingston
	CP 2	Pastor Church of God	Female	June 27	Kingston
	CP3	Pastor Charismatic	Male	June 28	Kingston
	CP4	Pastor United Church	Male	July 13	Kingston
	CP5	Pastor United Pentecostal	Male	July 18	Kingston
	CP6	Pastor Adventist	Male	July 19	Kingston
Theologians	Dr. Howard Gregory	Pastoral Counsellor (Anglican)	Male	June 12	Kingston
	Dr. Burchell Taylor	Pastor (Baptist)	Male	June 15	Kingston
	Dr. Vivian Panton	Pastoral Theologian (Baptist)	Male	June 25	Spanish Town
	Leon Dundas	Pastoral Theologian (Nazarene)	Male	July 2	Kingston
	Dr. Maitland Evans	Ch. Administrator (United Church)	Male	July 16	Kingston
	Ashley Smith	Seminary Lecturer (United Church)	Male	July 30	Kingston
Counsellors	Dr. Donovan Thomas	Youth Ministry	Male	May 17	Kingston
	Dr. Anthony Allen	Psychiatrist	Male	May 24	Kingston
	Dr. Barry Davidson	Family Therapist	Male	June 8	Kingston
	Faith Linton	Educator/ Family Worker	Female	June 22	St. Ann's Bay
Sociologists	Prof. Barry Chevannes	University Lecturer	Male	June 6-7	Kingston
	Hermoine Mckenzie	University Lecturer	Female	July 23	Kingston
	Blossom White	University Lecturer	Female	Sept. 3	Kingston
Government Personnel	Dr. Delores Brissett	Educator Ministry of Education	Female	June 15	Kingston

APPENDIX VII

EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY PASTORS

COMMUNITY PASTOR 1 (CP1)

EXCERPT 1

DH
Tell me a little bit about this particular inner-city area? How would you describe this community?

CP1
I'm still learning about it. **I find what I thought was a homogenous community, but when I started hearing about... the different places I wondered if it's the same place that I heard of when I came here in 1994/95. It seems a very diverse community with a number of imaginary lines and some drawn along political lines.** Others seemed to have some feuding that goes back. But it's a very interesting community. I don't think I know it to any great detail yet, because just as you think you know it, you'll find that there are more places that you have not really grasped as yet.

DH
Are there any kind of distinctions that you find between this community and the other inner-city communities?

CP1
Not necessarily. Upon reflection where I grew up in Waterhouse, we had turf, turf war. If you come from this street, you are not to be found in that area. I think it's the same thing happening here. I have had cases where someone is living in a certain part of the community and they could just walk a straight line to go across to another community but they have got to go all the way around, take a bus and come up on the other side. If you crossed that imaginary line and people see you coming from one side out to this side, you look like a traitor and you could risk being seen as a spy. So it's very interesting. These imaginary lines to me look like a foolish thing, but to the people it is real.

EXCERPT 2

DH
What do you see as some of the problems, the concerns that might be associated with that particular pattern that you are talking about? Or any other things that relate to family life in the community that you consider to be a concern or a problem?

CP1
I remember a case of a young woman crying, she actually broke down in tears because one of her son was about seventeen years old and the other one about thirteen or fourteen and she couldn't speak to any of them anymore. And she saw danger looming over these men. She saw the possibility of them being either shot by the police or by other gangs. And she just could not reach them. And she was crying out for help. She actually asked us if there was any way that the church could come in and take the place of the father because she herself was young and the son just did not see her as the authority figure in their lives anymore. And she really agonised over it.

DH
And she knew that there were getting involved in some...

CP1
She saw signs that they were going to be sucked into violence at least turf warfare. They might not be criminals but they were going to have to line up with the corner crew or the gangs or whatever it is, just to blend into the community. And she did not want that to happen to her children, because it usually ends up in death somewhere along the line. And she felt impotent; she just could not deal with it.

We tried to get the Women's Fellowship for instance, different fellowship groups with the different auxiliaries in the church, but we were like a closed shop. **The Men's Fellowship would meet, talk among ourselves and discuss our problems. We have been trying to get them now to change focus. Rather than we just sitting among ourselves, the focus should be maybe, to take these sessions out of the church and get out there.** We need to talk to the ladies. It is taking some time to get that focus changed because **many of us still tend to see the [church] family as us, the members who are baptised and are in church and we are oblivious to the needs of the wider community.**

COMMUNITY PASTOR 3 (CP3)

EXCERPT 1

DH

Tell me a little about this community. You said that you have been working in this particular area for about nine years. The community has come in for a lot of discussion over the last couple of years as a volatile community. What has been your experience? How would you describe the area?

CP3
Well, the community is a very exciting community in that, as you have indicated, it is a community that is volatile but I would hasten to say that despite its volatility that there are many good residents within the community. And that the violence, which is often highlighted, is being propagated by a few persons, definitely the minority of the people within the community. I have found the people within the community to be, by and large, very loving, very caring, nice people to relate to but at the same time there are the violent elements within the community. That's basically how I see the community.

DH
Some have talked about the community being many communities in one community. Has that been your experience? Even though it's being described as the (*Cross Town*) area, in fact when you get closer to it, it is really fragmented. Even the lanes and roads become sub-communities within the community. Has that been your experience of the area?

CP3
Well it hasn't really been my experience in that wherever we have gone as a church, we have been welcomed. **However, from the talk of the people within the community and in terms of their movement, it is very apparent that there are sub-communities with defined political differences and even in terms of certain behaviour patterns and so on. There are definitely differences which one can observe and which one has heard about within the community.**

DH
Would you say that there are any things about the community itself that is distinct from other inner-city communities?

CP3
Well to be honest with you, I am not really able to say because my experience has mainly been in this area and as I said, over the last nine years. This period of my life has been the only period that I have really had a very intense interaction with an inner-city community. So I can only speak from this point of view.

COMMUNITY PASTOR 4 (CP4)

EXCERPT 1

CP4
I am CP4, Minister of a congregation in the community and working in the community for approximately ten or eleven years. Prior to that, Minister in Hannah Town and working in the Mel Nathan Institute there.

DH
Now you say that you have been working at this congregation and therefore I would assume in this community as well for close to ten years.

CP4
Over ten years.

DH
Over ten years! Time flies! Tell me a little about this community? Your take and how would you describe this community?

CP4
We as Ministers, talk about the community as the extended area of (*Cross Town*). **This general area is quite unusual in that, it is a largish inner-city type community, but situated outside of the main inner-city communities. We are surrounded by a lot of middle class and even upper class areas but quite a considerable area of low income and what people would call ghetto communities, garrison communities**.

DH
Is there any particular ways in which you see it very much like other inner-city communities?

CP4
I think it's very much like other inner-city communities. I think it has changed over the last ten years since I have been here. It has become more like an inner-city community with its prevalence of guns. The gun issue has become a lot more noticeable over the last ten years. The other issues are poor accommodation, bad sanitation, poor garbage collection, over-crowding and poor education facilities. These have always been there, certainly in the period I have known the community. But the guns have moved in a lot more and the community has become more volatile and violent over the last ten years.

DH
In your view what might be some of the factors that are contributing to that?

CP4
I think the general proliferation of guns in Jamaica. I think it has also become more politically volatile because it is seen as a marginal area, which it wasn't before. It

was seen as a constituency, which belongs to one of the major political parties. And since the last eight or so years, it has been seen as being a marginal seat and also bordering on to two other seats which are also seen as marginal.

DH
By marginal, you mean it could swing either way?

CP4
It could swing either way, yes. I think that's a misconception. I don't think it is marginal but it is seen as marginal because the governing party won it about six or eight years ago.

DH
Now some have said that the community even though as you say, covers a wide area, is experienced as little pockets. Would you agree with that?

CP4
Yeah. **The community is very fractured as a community. People who drive through would see blocks of inner-city type community areas but they are sharply divided - politically with very clear boundaries between certain parts of it. So within this broad community are sub-communities that are divided along political lines.** Now obviously like in any inner-city community, perhaps more so uptown, within each pocket, which is seen as belonging to one party, there are many people living in that pocket who don't support the party who is seen as running in that area. But it is seen in pockets and I think I could draw the community and put little blocks around and say this is seen as this and this is seen as that.

EXCERPT 2

DH
What about parenting? Some of the work that I have seen in the community so far over the last two years, in terms of research in the area have suggested parenting as one of the big needs that some of the residents identify.

CP4
I think people talked a lot about parenting. I think there are obviously major needs for better, quality parenting. I think again though that **I would defend the level of parenting as not always as bad as it is pictured. The parenting or caring is often performed by a relative, who is not the father or mother, but often to a fairly high standard, a lot of genuine care and support and interest.** One of the difficult things to keep a tab on in the community is the number of young people who are growing to mature personhood because what we see and what we concentrate on are the ones who are becoming gun men or becoming mothers when they are twelve. I think my examination would be that there are a lot more than some people give credit to - growing up to be sensible, mature and thoughtful people.

EXCERPT 3

DH
Let's then look at some of the concerns, the needs, the problems and the challenges that you see arising for families in a community like this. There might be some of them that are direct results of the kinds of patterns of family but there might be other things that lead to these particular challenges. As you look at families in this community in its widest understanding, what would you consider to be some of the needs and concerns?

CP4
I think we are going to have great fun at looking at the chicken and the eggs scenario. That is, whether it is the violence that breeds poor families or poor families which breed the violence and the difficulties involved. I think we have to say that they are interrelated and they are critical issues. **One of the things is just the issue of harshness. The environment is harsh, the economics are harsh, and the opportunities are limited. So there is a sense that everything is harsh and it is hard when people are under pressure and everything flows harsh. So gentleness is not seen as being an appropriate response. Clearly if that element of nurture and care are missing, the next generation will be harsh too.** So the ability to display tenderness, touch, physical contact becomes more and more skewed and more and more difficult. I think so many things need to be put in place which say to us, we're allow to be soft, that softness is not weakness, gentleness is not weakness, hugging a child is not some sign of psychological imbalance but is a normal part of care and family life. In many ways, that would be number one in my issue and number one for the church's response as well too. We should try to provide an environment where we can say gentle things and do gentle things to each other. And they are not seen as weakness but they are seen as strength. Together we are able to touch and hold and embrace and cry and laugh. So signs of emotions are not again signs of weakness.

EXCERPT 4

DH
Do you see the present policies and programmes of churches as meeting those needs at the moment?

CP4
Not completely. I don't think any church has got its act together completely on those things. For example, where men's fellowship and women's fellowship are concerned, I think that perhaps in view of the crisis in family life in Jamaica and the importance of this, perhaps those are the organizations which are extinct. Perhaps they are supporting other things and certainly the programmes that they pursue, for example, men's fellowship does nothing that talks about the man as a family being. Men's fellowship raises money and put on certain events and say we are the men of the church, and why aren't there more of them. But it does not help men to deal with the fact that they have feelings. Instead the men's fellowship is a place where the

men put on a show of being a big man and does everything to deny that they are people who hurt, feel pain and regret that they did not do this, that they have broken relationships in the past, that they have not been a father to their children and how do they try and do anything to amend those things. Those are not issues you can put on men's fellowship agenda as it is currently organised. You might try but there will be all sorts of blockages. In other words, those aren't the things that they want to do. So perhaps we need to look at different groups.

EXCERPT 5

DH
A lot of people talked about the need to have parenting seminars, homework clubs and some male empowerment things, how do you see those things?

CP4
I think two of the very obvious ones are anything that can help children who are in poor circumstance to have a place which is safe and quiet and have some access and some little degree of supervision and support. So homework clubs and extra classes are very, very sensible and very obvious. Clearly we have to be looking at anything that will uplift the economics of the community.

Parenting I think… Going in and do parenting seminars **we have to be very careful that it is done very sensitively** because this can**.....**If we are not careful, this can ..... because of the sort of people we use as experts. And model of family, which we are saying, is not the model which is most prevalent within that community. **So parents can start believing that they are failures as parents because they are not fitted in the legalised form or Christian marriage pattern. So many of the people who are experts on family patterns speak from a very middle class perspective which is inappropriate and dangerous because they fail to see the positives of parenting which are present in the community already**. It does not build on them but tends to put in a different model.

Parenting approach obviously needs to be done but need to be done very, very carefully and very thoughtfully by people who really have their fingers at the pulse of that community and of the people who they are speaking with. I have seen some very bad examples of people coming in and trying to impose a way of doing things on the people in this community. And in fact, the ways they have done them, have created negative feelings in the people. So people need to do the research and learn from the research before they start doing it and not just going in with their expert knowledge. In Jamaica, we got a lot of imported models which we try to place them in Jamaica. The difference between USA and Jamaica and the differences between Upper St. Andrew and *Cross Town* are about the same. There are huge cultural differences between different areas of Kingston living within a mile of each other. And so to impose one system upon another is a form of cultural barrier that might not work.

EXCERPT 6

DH
What do you see now though as some of the kinds of ways or the specific types of programmes, policies or otherwise that the church needs to consider as it responds to the concerns of the family?

CP4
I think I've pointed out that we want touching, caring support and encouraging people to be able to display their emotions and to display touch. I think we also need ongoing things within the church that support family. **I think so many of our social events, so many of our clubs, so many of our organizations are anti-family. They actually work to divide family. So the woman can be at church every single night and the man does not come to any of those things. We need to do things that encourage partnership and working together - parents and children, grandparents and children, all the different models but being involved together in activities**.

APPENDIX VIII-A

EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH THEOLOGIANS

HOWARD GREGORY

EXCERPT 1

DH
Dr. Gregory, as you are probably aware, my area of study is looking at the family. I think I would like to start off by asking whether you think there is a clear theology of the family in the churches in Jamaica?

GREGORY
Well, I don't think there is such a thing. I think that we have assumed that there is because I still think that when the church talks of family, the church is talking about a nuclear family, which it is good to say it is the ideal as it is advocated, but we are not really talking about the reality of family. I think we still feel that the other forms are manifestations of sin and dysfunction. This settles the issue for us and therefore we just move ahead. That other forms may manifest positive coping strategies for that matter that we are not even willing to entertain.... I just listen every so often to criticisms which are geared towards getting people on a path that create a nuclear family and then all will be well and that's alright. We're missing the boat in the sense that while we stay on that track, most persons of the society are on another one and we are not really meeting them.

So in terms of a theological position, I think that we need to go back to asking some fundamental questions about - What is family? Where are we getting our theological notions about what a family should be like? Is family a structure, form? Is family about relationship? Is family about legal relationships? I think conjugal relationships are things we have to go back to basics and try to develop.

DH
So in your view you don't think that the way the church looks at family now is affected very much by the cultural realities.

GREGORY
Affected in the sense of it being negatively, in the sense that we want to separate ourselves from it, and we want to have a notion of family that moves in a certain direction. Almost daily when you hear the comments about the break up of family life, what they mean is that you are not seeing more nuclear families and that the nuclear families are not functioning any better than the others. It's like once you get people married, their relationship and life must be on a different level from any other form. What the reality may be, we would not want to entertain it.

BURCHELL TAYLOR

EXCERPT 1

DH
Let's come to the issue of family as something that's alive in the Caribbean context and to say if there is any... Do you perceive a need for say a Caribbean theology of the family?

TAYLOR
Sure, sure. Clearly, there must be that. Any serious development and especially the kind of theology that Caribbean theology belongs - the family, it's very socio-ethical, it's not dogmatic and makes the kind of traditional division between theology and ethics. It is theology that is ethical and it is ethics that is theological, if one wants to say so and family is critical in this kind of thing. So I really think so.

DH
Do you think that there are signs of a clear theology?

TAYLOR
No, I don't think so. Not at this stage. I think that the political family values debate from the United States is very strong especially in the evangelical churches rather than looking at what's on the ground and how we deal with it.

DH
I'm kind of hearing from that, that what is visible, particularly in the evangelical churches, is not informed very much by the culture at all.

TAYLOR
Not at all. This is my feeling. When I look at the programmes that they put out, when I listen to programmes on the radio by the experts in this thing, I don't regard them but I listen as I am a pastor, I must have this thing so I listen but then - not at all. They're dealing with norms, values that are socio-cultural, they are not even biblical but have since been canonised as being biblical. People will tell you about the biblical ideal of marriage and you will ask them to show me the typical example. It's a collage of something taken from this family but they couldn't show me the typical thing and so they are just talking like that. You understand? People talked about breakdown in family life but where is that and how is that?

EXCERPT 2

DH
I guess that one of the big concerns is whether or not what the church is doing now in terms of its pastoral policy and pastoral practice is speaking to some of those needs of the family, stigmatisation and the issues of the parenting and those kinds of things. Do you think it is speaking to some of those needs?

TAYLOR
No man, it is a struggle. And those who are thinking.... Much of the thinking has to take place underground. Much of the practice has to take place underground. Some people don't have the benefit of that because they live in small community and everybody knows everybody. People like me… at a crossroad; you can practise some things and get away with it, because you will even get revolt even in the membership...until you educate them. I am going to share with you my main...Look at the title of that.

DH
In Search of a Pastoral Ministry Practise - The Case of Stable Non-legal Unions.

TAYLOR
This is the booklet of our study.

DH
That's the Bethel Baptist Church Deacons' Board Assignment - The Church and common-law union.

TAYLOR
Right. This is the big document that we are involved in. We have panel, questions. Right now the project is in another stage where we are interviewing people.

DH
Tell me what the project is about really?

TAYLOR
The project is - how do we deal at this stage with people who have accepted Christ and are living in common-law relationships? These constitute eighty per cent (80%) of the people you evangelise.

DH
No small percentage.

TAYLOR
It's eighty per cent - it's your largest constituency.

DH
And is probably reflective of what's true in the society.

TAYLOR
It's the largest proportion of your evangelising constituency.

DH
And you say this affects both men and women.

TAYLOR
Both of them but especially women because you realise that men are not coming forward and this is where I believe the church continues the oppression. Because a man decides...they have a good relationship going by all the standards that you want, but the man decides he is not ready. The church takes side with him. The church discriminates against the women. It's a major pastoral practice.

APPENDIX VIII-B
EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH COUNSELLORS

BARRY DAVIDSON

EXCERPT 1

DH
We have looked at the range of some of the patterns we see in the inner-city, we have considered some of the concerns or challenges that those lead to and I wonder if we could look at how the church is responding to those or perceived to be responding to those and to begin that by asking - do you think the church has a clear theology of the family? Do you think of some sort of theological, philosophical bases, do you think there is a clear theology of the family?

DAVIDSON
I don't necessarily think so. I don't think the church has a clear philosophy of the family but I think the Bible does help us to have a clear.... If we were to observe the relationship between God and His children, we see some patterns coming out. We see for instance, that there was a kind of unconditional love, not a contractual love. Not a love which says I love you only if or I love you only when but it was a love that was certainly unconditional. And I think we can observe that from Scriptures in terms of the relationship between God and His children.

We also can observe a relationship between God and His children where we seek grace rather than legalism. So there is a sense in which you forgive and you're forgiven. It's not a legalism which gives a list of thou shalt not and if you fail to live up to or break these rules, then you are out of this family or you are not a part of this family or you are less than. There is a sense in which there is grace rather than legalism.

I think also if we observe the relationship between God and His children, we see empowerment rather than control. They are not robots. You have clear direction and guidance but you are not made as a robot. And so there is empowerment, you are encouraged to be and become rather than to be controlled to say - listen this is what you have to do or else you are no longer mine.

I think that there is a sense in which as we observe God and his children, we observe also intimacy. And intimacy makes me free to be. Intimacy involves my being able to commune with, to talk with, to reason with, to be myself with and get close to oneness with. And I think that the theology of the family encourages that. That for me, is my own theology of the family, that understanding of God and His relationships with us.

If you look at it carefully, you will find that it is going to fulfil a lot of the real needs that people have. They want to feel love and they want their love to be not

conditional, but an unconditional love. And as such if a son does something bad and is put in prison, the mother still loves him, she goes to visit him, so he is visited and is coming back to a group of people that did not throw him away, that did not write him off, but he is coming back to a group of people who has demonstrated love to him in his worse. He is coming back to experience forgiveness, not the legalism that says, you have done wrong, then sorry you are second, third or fourth class. He is also coming back to experience empowerment where he is now given an opportunity to be better than he has ever been. He is coming back to experience intimacy… you are still one of us and we are one. And I think that that for me is the theology of the family, to be able to do that.

FAITH LINTON

EXCERPT 1

DH
Thank you very much Mrs. Linton for agreeing to this interview. As I was mentioning earlier on, I am presently doing some studies in Scotland, trying to do a Ph.D. and my focus is on helping the church to develop a model for working with families particularly in an inner-city community. As part of it, I am hoping to look at the whole thing of a theology of the family but I guess ultimately to look at the implications of that theology for the practical engagement with families in an inner-city context. So that's a little bit about what I am doing.

LINTON
I find this very significant, what you have just said. I am particularly, at the moment, taken up with the - how we got to where we've got? I know that, for example, a lot of the inner-city folks were people who came from the country, from the rural areas. Not so very long ago either and really and truly what we are seeing in the inner-city communities, I feel are simply a development out of what they brought themselves, what they brought from the country, from the rural areas. And what is true, the whole Jamaican situation coming out of our historical background. It is interesting that you have talked about developing a counselling model because the significance of this has only just come home to me in the last few days literally. And the book that has done it for me is Neilson Waite's *Caribbean Sexuality*. **Somehow I kept seeing things from a woman's point of view and I was aware that there was a very big problem where the male population was concerned. But I was still seeing them as not doing this; they are not being what they ought to be. But I had not grasped the depth of the problem and how deep-seated it is and how very serious the problem with our men and where it's coming from**. Neilson Waite helped me to see where it was coming from. What I have realised is this, contrary to what some people think, our family patterns do not come out of our African roots and Neilson Waite makes that very clear.

DH
That's a very controversial point because there are some who insist that it represents retentions from the African past while others talked about it being a direct result of the destructive nature of the slavery experience.

LINTON
Neilson Waite points out…I would just refer you to his book, because he has helped me to look at it in this way. I knew long ago that the Africa, out of which our ancestors came, was an Africa with tribal communities that had quite rigid patterns of family life. And so I am quite surprised –I don't know in what sense –how we are behaving, how could that be an African retention, given the fact that everything was so highly regulated. And the way they socialised their young people into patterns of marriage and family life and the rigid requirements as it were that were set up by the society. This is totally the opposite to what occurs now. Even if we are behaving in a certain way that may remind you of a certain…For example, this feeling that a man

can cope with more than one woman. But the way we go about it is totally different. For them it is a highly regulated thing. A man can have as many wives as he can afford and he can maintain. And yes, so if you have the resources but you go about it in a certain way that is approved of by the society, that is laid down and established as a pattern. Not this travelling across the island in a truck and making girls pregnant that you don't even know their names. That's not what our ancestors came out of even if present day Africans may be doing that. We did not come out…we came out of something highly organised, established and regulated. And this is where I feel that Neilson Waite points out that even the patterns that we have, they do not have their counterpart in present day Africa.

I was talking about this only on Wednesday night at the Brown's Town Tabernacle where they are having their family emphasis week. And there was an African nurse, only recently come to Jamaica, she has only been a few months in Jamaica, and I had no idea she was African and I was talking about this and how Neilson Waite talks about the Yoruba for example and how they go about their….how their patterns are. They are in a sense, legalised, legal patterns. Legal in the sense that these are sanctioned by the society. He says in Nigeria you don't find the proportion of non-legal unions that we have. He says in one study in the 70s, I think, they found a forty- three point something percent (43+ %) of all the male-female unions were visiting relationships. Now this is not how life is organised in Africa and this lady says she kept nodding, apparently, nodding her head. She says you have learned the African history well, she said. And afterwards she says we cherish marriage so much. So she confirmed Neilson Waite thing that he had taught me was correct. She says we cherish marriage. That is not true of Jamaica. We don't cherish marriage.

DH
Some would say that a lot of the changes in the patterns have been related to economic conditions, economic realities of the post-slavery time, of men having to be forced to go and find work elsewhere and that kind of thing, of the difficulty of accepting responsibility for a household now because they feel that they are not able to maintain it. So you still want the relationship, you still want children but you don't have the resources to maintain a family in the sense that you might want to. And that this is what might lead to some of the present patterns of having different women and not having the commitment in a marriage setting.

LINTON
The way I have understood it, is that, these factors have aggravated the situation and coloured them in a certain way and encouraged certain trends. But the breakdown happened way before that. Because in situations where these pressures come on people who are convinced and who cherished family life, you don't have to become the victims of your circumstances. You have a choice and if you have certain convictions, you will find a way out of the pressures. You do not have to succumb to those pressures. It is because the man in the Caribbean and the woman were so deeply damaged and because the patterns that have been established in their ancestral home, were so thoroughly brainwashed from them. That is why we succumbed so easily to these economic pressures. **To me, it's a deep psychological problem.** This is why I am so interested in your counselling approach because this is the point that

Neilson Waite makes. He says, well the way I extrapolate it, he points out that the Missionaries that came were of the Victorian era and the Victorian era were very conscious of the importance of family life. And they were coming out of the regency period where people had been very lax in their morals. And in the Victorian era, they were restoring some of these values and Biblical principles. So they were thrilled, the missionaries, when immediately after slavery, there was a rush of the slaves getting married. And then it fell off so quickly, after ten years. In other words, it reverted to what slavery had established as it were because they did not perhaps appreciate what really had been broken down. And they were not approaching it from the point of view of counselling. They were preaching and teaching. The way you deal with a situation where you have a child, where you have taught that child ever since the child was about two or three about speaking the truth and you find out when the child is ten that he has told a lie. You say, you know better. All you have to do is to say you know better. Now you can't do that in a situation where things have broken down as deeply and as thoroughly and people have been damaged in this area and people have been brainwashed. You can't just approach it that way. Their approach was inadequate. They did it the way they would have done it in England. 'You know, our forefathers had the Bible and don't you see'.... Just come back to it. It's within living memory. For example, even within the States, there was a trend where people were shacking up and apparently the trend is now coming back to marriage. But the ones who were shacking up had grown up in marriage and so you could easily remind them what they had come out of. But you can't approach it that way in the Caribbean. And Neilson Waite says you can't just fill them with shame and guilt and put a lot of blame, which is one approach when you know that people know better and which can work with certain kinds of personalities. And especially where there is a foundation of truth and principle and standards. But where this has thoroughly broken down and people don't know anything different from the aberrant pattern, then **you have to approach it from a counselling point of view**. This is why I am so interested in what you have said.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Given the fact that, that pattern has continued down to now, the question remains how do we, as church, work with that? Panton, for example, advocates accepting common-law unions as an approximation of marriage and working with it. In other words, coming to a place of an acceptance of the patterns where they are. Even if you are going to work with families towards a more stable union but not seeing a union that is not legal as one that is not viable. In other words, the question is, do we continue to force the people to get legally married? Do we accept the non-legal marriage? Do we accept common-law as a viable non-legal? How do we work with those unions?

LINTON
Before I answer that question directly I just want to make this point. **That one of the key mistakes we must not make is to think that when we use the word marriage, that it has the meaning for those coming out of the historical values that it had**

for the first world Christianised countries. It does not. I have this discussion, interestingly enough, it came up on Wednesday morning when I was speaking at the Carl Rattray Centre in Runaway Bay which is where they trained correctional officers and warders and so on. They are now training a batch of correctional officers to man the new Remand Centre that is being built in Spanish Town. They don't want to use any of the older ones and I was asked to go and talk about the Sociology of the Jamaican Family. And that is why I was reading up Waite. We were talking about the fact as Waite says, that there were these three unions – visiting, common-law and marital. And sometimes you often move from one to the next to the next. We were looking at each, the advantages and disadvantages. One of the things I was pointing out is that so often we are moving into these things. We are not choosing it, it just happens. And sometimes the visiting turns into common-law because your mother push you out of the home and the man is forced to take you in and maybe he has another woman on the side and maybe he would have preferred to take her in and those sort of thing. I mean this is the most obvious way you can counsel a man to make it…they could see how it does not make sense. It is manly or humanly right that a person should be just in one of the most important areas of your life, is just pressure and just bad luck.

DH
It just a happen.

LINTON
It just a happen so. No choice, no thought out thing in advance. That's what it means to be a man. To be a human being means that you plan ahead, especially in the important things.

Then we talked about…this is something now Barry Wade has pointed out, but we know that long ago too, that when we have a common-law union that works well and many have in the past especially. Things are changing now. We don't have as many stable common-law ones going on for the long time we have, when I was in rural Jamaica long time. My helper, she lived with one man and had all her children with one man. And when she came to me her children, you know…. she had all her children with this one man living together with him. They weren't married and I just said something to her one day, you know why don't you put the thing together. She wanted to go back into her church and all that. She is a Christian now and everything and she was so quick, so quick. But I knew that one of the things that makes a problem is this and which makes the man especially not wanting to go into it, is that the psychology of…the whole business of what marriage traditionally means. It means me can't live in one room anymore and me not going with you to your yam field. You better hire somebody, me not doing all the washing, cooking, cleaning and everything.

EXCERPT 3

DH
I'm interested to explore some more the thing about the theology because that's so much the crux of what I want to develop. If we are constructing a theology of the family that is contextual, you mentioned the importance of understanding the image of God as central to that. What might be some of the other elements of a contextual theology of the family?

LINTON
The fact that marriage and the family are the metaphors through which God reveals the ultimate aim of God for His creation. If He can talk about Christ as the bridegroom, and the church as the bride, that in itself indicates that is a fitting metaphor for what heaven is all about and what God's aim and goal are....This matter of belonging to His family, joint heirs with Christ, adopted sons. Right? If this is the metaphor....And can't you not see too why the enemy is so wanting to destroy the metaphor**. I have actually talked to people, one young girl stood up in a session I was doing and she says I am a Christian but I cannot call God Father. The metaphor has been totally destroyed in her life so the meaning of father has been so distorted. She could not apply it to God.** That is such a serious thing. I wonder if you saw something that came out in the Gleaner recently about people responding to their fathers.

DH
No. I am not sure.

LINTON
Oh, you have to read it. Let me get it right now... In Isaiah 66 where God describes mothering there are three pictures – the breast-feeding, the carrying of the baby on the arm and the dandling of the baby on the knees. And then he says as a mother comforts a child, so do I. We did it at camp and right afterwards the counsellors said that this appealed to them in a way that no other picture would because all of them know that kind of relationship with mother. And so that picture of God would have appealed to them.

APPENDIX VIII-C
EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIOLOGISTS

BARRY CHEVANNES

EXCERPT 1

DH
I'm thinking of patterns not only in terms of the structural configurations but some of the things we discussed a while ago like the male-female dynamics, like the parenting patterns and so on. When we take those as a whole, how do we assess them? Do we assess those only as adaptations? Is there a place for assessing the pathological effects? In other words, do we assess it in pathological terms, is there a problem there. The second end of that question is - are there any needs and concerns that sort of arise as a result of these patterns of family?

CHEVANNES
Well first of all, I reject the pathological notion that the Caribbean family is a result of pathology. I think we have struggled for years and years against that and I think that people are coming around to viewing this as adaptive. In other words, given the history of where we are coming from, it's a wonder it wasn't worse and that there is a fairly stable pattern if you look at it diachronically and not only stable, but also it has underlying values that are sensible values. Now at any one particular time you may see the thing as pathological but if you look at it overall, you'll see something working it's way through.

Now having said that, it's not happy for a woman to be alone raising a child and it is worse for her to have several different men but if you view...that's if you view it as a structural form in itself and not see that it is not in itself because it is part of an evolving process which started one way and is leading in another direction. And she may end up marrying you know at another point in time. And it is the trajectory that's the important thing. The striving for stability which is also true for the man itself, the man is affected by this and men would love to delay marriage and they are not in a rush to get married but the marriage brings them respectability as well. You know the concept of being a big man, now at the same time, I would think that one would want to diminish the incidence of unions that a person has to go through in order to find that stability and this is where you may call it a pathology but it's not a pathology, I don't think it's a pathology for...to have a visiting union with all the frailty. What makes it pathological is the lack of help that young people need, the resources to stabilise themselves, to get counselling and to realise what they are doing is compounding the matter, you know what I mean, that their union could be better, that they are not fitted together, it's better to break it up rather than to continue and all these things and they need that because it's at the early years really that the problems begin. The problem is concentrated because in that period from about eighteen to nineteen in the case of a woman up to the late twenties, that is the

crisis, the critical period. She would have, by the time she reaches twenty-eight or twenty-nine, she would have gone through two or three unions on an average which means that you're trying. You tried once, twice, maybe even three times you still trying with somebody meanwhile time is getting on and you are having the children who are growing and so forth. And if you could shorten that period, it would in fact help because it would mean that on average you would have more people reaching stability quicker and earlier and involving as they develop the children.

DH
So it sounds like a kind of contradiction that there is a quest for stability, a process happening but the choices that are being made en route to that are destabilising choices.

CHEVANNES
No, not that they are destabilising, but that they are inherently unstable. The idea is to make it better, to stabilise it. So when a boy talks to a girl, think of the values that are involved in that. First of all, it's not...it is purely voluntarily and sanctioned only by the two of them, so it is consensual in that sense. It is accepted by the families usually involved. This is different from say the Indians where before they can even start to talk or do anything, the families have to approve because their families assert themselves in that way.

The African - Caribbean family because my argument is... because of the destruction of the lineage, which is what the kinship system, was based on; the African kinship system is based on the lineage. What I mean is that African polity society is based on the lineage. You are nobody, it is your lineage that is important and within that you have your full security. If you want to marry that girl, your lineage head is the one that gives you the go-ahead. Now the slavery, enslavement threw us all together but not as lineages…

So each marriage is an individual and though we have built back some of that, we don't have the depth of lineage tradition. What we have is the breadth so we know who our relatives are on both sides. We have systems of marriages which are remnants of this that have come down to us now and it is that you must asked for the girl, so there needs to be some approval. There is still need for approval on the side of the families and once that approval is given, then you can cohabit. So the cohabitation is done...it has a sanction. Even if it is not sanctioned, it can be done because the child is still quite free. But it is only the moral pressure of family that prevents it…

Now the visiting union that started by you talking to my sister without living together, assumes that you can in fact have a sexual relationship because it is now known, it is accepted by my family and so on and no problem. Children begin to come and with that responsibilities as well. And the families begin to get anxious now - what is your intention? They want to ensure that you are stable, that you are going to move. You have been together now not just three years but four - but it very stable, it's very nice because we have accepted you as a son in law now and speak of you as that as well. They speak of a son in law not just in terms of a marriage but

also in terms of the informal marriage and they work it through. So where the problem lies now is where you have the lack of support system whether from the family or from the community to make it work and help the couples to go through the problems, handle the children and so forth… In the course of this where the pathology manifests itself is in the political economy being unable to stabilise the man. There is high unemployment and **once there is high unemployment you are bound to have a high incidence of family types that can't be rooted because no man is going to feel with any self-respect if he can't have money to give a woman for his child/children. It's not self-respecting and so men shy away from their paternal responsibilities and in fact, not shy away, she does not want to see you**.

EXCERPT 2

DH
The idea of when you grow up with your mother and there is a close relationship with your mother that in a sense conveys to you some idea of how you show love as a parent. When you have not had that, that creates a gap in a sense and....

CHEVANNES
But I'm saying that the gap is not filled… **It can't be filled by just talking. It has to be filled by relationships**. If you talk about NGO's and what they need to do, if you build relationships with people, That's what social work is all about - **building relationships with people and fostering a different sense of self in them**, that's how you do that.

HERMOINE MCKENZIE

EXCERPT 1

DH
What would you see as some of the patterns that are there?

McKENZIE
You know, I gave quite a lot of reflection to this question. **It seems to me, the fundamental pattern is a pattern of reproduction.** I want to give you an example. I was reading the very sad story of the young lady last week who got shot in her temples. In fact, she had a miraculous escape because the bullet went right through her head from one side to the other. She was a nineteen year old in the current crisis last week. And she lost the vision of both eyes. But in her story, one of the very hopeful things she said was, thank heavens, I have already had a child. She is nineteen and she has a two-year-old son. And it looks to me that is almost the only thing she sees as positive or hopeful in her life. That no matter what happens to her in the future, she has already had her child. She already has someone, you could say blood of her blood, or flesh of her flesh, (whatever you want to call it), which will be her comfort I hope. Obviously he is also going to be filled with tremendous responsibility. She is blind and she can't earn a living and so on. He is also going to be an additional responsibility but she does not see it that way at all. She sees it as thankfully she has achieved one thing in her life. And I am using that example, as I say. But when I saw your question, I thought to myself, the real issue is, that **people, especially women but also men have come to focus on reproduction and you could say creating bonds with their children above and beyond any other sort of familial structure or ignoring any other familial structure**. One other contemporary trend, I think you mentioned it somewhere else and I agree very much that this is an important trend - multiple partners. And that is also linked with the reproduction issues. You know that in a sense...I think, my mind is jumping ahead to the other questions that you have asked, but I think the church somehow or other has to address sexuality in a real serious down to earth way. It has to be able to address people's sexual behaviour.

EXCERPT 2

DH
Just to get back to that personality thing that you mentioned, some have spoken about the family pattern being a kind of cycle of low self-esteem. That very often, some of the patterns of parenting give rise to a personality type (that we talked about earlier) and that personality type is more prone to form unions without the kind of thoughtfulness and sort of critical assessment. You get into unions, you have children, which you are not ready for and you get into the pattern of parenting in an environment that is not completely ready for them. They also develop....Some have argued that there is also that kind of cycle of low self-esteem that seemed inherent in the patterns as they exist now. How would you respond to that?

McKENZIE
My response surprisingly is, I would love to see some good research on this. There is a research group in our medical faculty that is looking at things like children exposure to violence and how it does affect their personality and stuff like that. While we are talking, I think Madeline Kerr's book *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica*, (1949) I have not seen.....but she was an English woman who had done personality studies in Britain so she had some background experience. So she came out and did this study of personality and conflict in Jamaica. And I think she did try to understand the way of life of the Jamaican people and how that might affect the type of personality that Jamaicans had. I don't know if her observations were any good because she is coming to a different culture and she is making her judgements and so on. But I would love to see something like personality and conflict in Jamaica in the year 2001.

DH
Something more contemporary.

McKENZIE
Yes. We do have, as I say, a group in the medical faculty who are doing things on like socialisation, and how it plays out in children's lives and behaviour and so on. But I think you need some real experts. And I think what I am really saying is from the psychological point of view and I am not a psychologist, I am a sociologist but you need some expert studies of how our parenting practices create a certain sort of personality. In fact, I read somewhere that the self-esteem problem is much more. It is created really by very conforming parents. It is not created by poor parenting. It is created by over parenting. That is the impression I get from the little that I have read. One of the reasons children grow up with low self esteem is that they are grown up by parents who are very demanding, very controlling of the child and the child has not likely developed its own autonomy, its own ability to handle himself and so on. But again I think my response to you would be - go and talk with some psychologists and hear what they would have to say. But I do not doubt.....But you see we need to talk about the opposites. I have been talking about the fact that some parents, some fathering I think at the moment, is influenced by the fact that some fathers looked back and say, 'I never knew my father or my father treated me very badly and I am not going to let my children experience that'. This is something one should also talk to a psychologist about. I think that the human person has a lot of self-direction. So it is not enough to say that because you grew up in a dysfunctional family, you are also going to be dysfunctional. Yes, you may but you may be equally perceptive enough to see (and you do not have to be an educated person), you may be perceptive enough to see where your own dysfunction came from and to say I don't want my child to experience that dysfunction. **The human being has choices, vision and ability to move beyond his or her own formative experience**. That's my creed and therapy.

EXCERPT 3

DH
But I think there is a lot more. Since his book has been out, there has been a lot more openness and discussion and reflection about how they ought to respond. I think one of the big problems that we face is, that, I think, the faithful common-law relationships are not as common as visiting relationships nor are they as common as short-term cohabitation relationships, which seems to be the two types that are more common in an inner-city setting. And then one is faced therefore with whether or not you are giving licence to those kinds of unions.

McKENZIE
You use a telling phrase, why did you say giving licence to? Because in a sense it is a negative. I can't even find the right word.

DH
I understand what you mean though. It is as if something is wrong with those and you are giving them…

McKENZIE
In fact, I am of the opinion...**I would like to say that perhaps the faithful common-law union is almost a myth**. Not that it does not exist, in the sense that people live together lifelong without marriage. But I think it is my old Professor Roberts, who is now dead, who used to do very detailed studies about population trends and so on. He was a demographer. And I am sure he came up with some study that said, if instead of marriage, you go into a common-law union; you are likely to be in three common-law unions in your lifetime. In other words, those are sorts of probabilities he calculated from the evidence. What I am trying to say is, if you commit yourself to a marriage, you are likely to stay in the marriage, although marriage is also dissolved and separate and so on. But if you start off in a common-law union, you are not likely to finish your lifetime in the same common-law union that you started. In other words, settling into a common-law union already says, this is a union that is easily to dissolve. And in fact, that's why, in many cases, for whatever were the reasons of the two partners, it is precisely that they did not feel ready to commit to marriage so they went into common-law in the first place. And that looseness or facility for coming out is the reason why they went in there. So it is not surprising that many people will in fact come out…

So let's go back to the church's problem. The first problem of the church is, - if you are living your whole life in a common-law union, why won't you marry? What are the barriers to making a religious and a legal commitment when in fact you have lived your whole life….And Edith Clarke I think is the one ...No, it was Fernando Henriques who documented that a lot of people, (he wrote in the 1940s so things may have changed since he wrote) go through the marriage ceremony on their death bed because they don't want to go into eternity illegal. You know, they don't want to go into eternity into an immoral state but they lived their whole life in faithful concubinage (as I think the early writers used to put) but they still don't get married. So that's the first problem the church has to deal with. I don't have any answer to

the church… When you go and ask the partners why, they tell all sorts of trivial answers like they can't finance the wedding or their house not built yet. But I feel that those are surface reasons. There must be a more in-depth resistance to this idea of religious and legal commitment and that is why they would spend their lifetime in a common-law union. They would not get married. So I would say that's one situation.... But I think the more fundamental challenge to the church is exactly what we talked about - what would you do with a person who is just cohabiting for a year or two, well ready to get out. When I say out, well prepared to get out if necessary. Or what do you do with the person who in fact.... Let's say you have a visiting relationship with a married man. He too already has a family and you have three children for this man. You know those are tremendous challenges to the church, because there is no reason why that woman might not say, 'okay, I am going to try and break my sexual relationship with this man. I am not going to have more children for him.' But the three children are already there. He probably is supporting the three children. Again my same Professor Roberts documented …because he did a study in the 70s of the women in visiting unions.... Parents come to look for the children. You yourself said it. The fathers come to look for the children. Even if the woman says okay, this is immoral, you really are committing to somebody else and I am going to break off my relationship with you, others say the three children of the union are already there. These are some really challenging questions. And I think one of the challenges I would put to the church perhaps - what about the three children? Since my focus is on the next generation. Regardless of how you want to treat that mother, what responsibility might you have for a mission to those three children out of wedlock? They can never be in wedlock because the man is already married to somebody else. "The sins of the fathers visit themselves upon the children."

BLOSSOM WHITE

EXCERPT 1

DH
I don't know if you are seeing any counselling issues, concerns that relate to the pain that family members carry, either the children or partners in relationship. Any particular pain that reflect what they are experiencing in families?

WHITE
I think women are feeling a lot of emotional pain when the relationships don't work out. Another thing is that many women would want to get married, not all, but many women would want to get married especially after being in a common-law union for several years and because of the culture again where men still feel that marriage is on a pedestal, it is out of their reach. You have to have financial security; many of these men do not want to get married.

I remember doing an interview with a man who had been in a common-law union for twenty-five years and they had five children. The woman went into the church, moved out of the bedroom and went into another bedroom because **she** wanted to serve God. **And when I asked the man why he didn't want to get married to her after so many years he said, 'miss wife a wife and woman a woman. If I have a wife, I have to provide certain things for her, different from a woman.' So for him that was a barrier**. I think many women are feeling that sort of pain, that after being in a relationship for so many years, they would really like to get married especially coming into the church but they are being hindered. And then for many of them, this was their first love; it is the first sort of stable relationship. Some of them it is the first man they ever had any relationship with, some of them they are not economically viable, they have no skill, they have no job. Some of them have built together for years. So to walk out of a relationship with children or to leave the children behind it is difficult and these are some of the issues that women are facing.

APPENDIX IX

EXCERPTS FROM FIELD NOTES

EXCERPT 1

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

I shared with him (a community pastor) my burden and concern for the family and the details of my research as well as the kind of help that I needed from the church. He told me he had been in the area for over forty years. **He shared some of his own experiences of ministry in the area and talked about a recent crusade his church had in the community. The response, he said, was overwhelming but when it came to baptism time, many were reluctant. In his opinion various things 'bind' many of them. I know for the most part he meant bound spiritually but he made reference also to the fact that many were living a "shacking-up life" or in "concubinage." I could not help wondering if the response for baptism at his church might not have been different if he had another approach to those living in "shacking-up life and "concubinage."** He was cautious about setting dates without consultation of the wider Fraternal and in our conversation he made reference to the coming together of the churches with fondness.

I was pleased too when he mentioned the fact that he had a reputation for not marrying people without counselling them. Of course, what is done as counselling and how extensive or consistent it is, I do not know. However, I was happy that this was an important guiding principle for him. That day he was expecting three couples for premarital counselling. It would also be interesting to know how many of these had been in common-law relationships before contemplating marriage and what had made them decide to get married. It was evident from his relations with some people who were waiting for him, including a Rastafarian, that he was well respected in the community.

He has a full time job outside of the pastoral ministry and this he felt was necessary to provide for his family. His fancy utility vehicle suggested that he was probably doing a good job of that. I am sure however that this limits his availability for other pastoral care work and general availability for work in the community. Our talk was cordial and he seemed pleased at my choice of topic and willing to help… I left feeling that it was a good encounter. I was hearing the enthusiasm for the Fraternal from yet another voice. The encounter however also reminded me of the challenges I will have, to change old attitudes and ways of seeing things. In that sense it was a reality check.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Airhart, P., and **Bendroth, M.,** Eds. *Faith Traditions and the Family.* Family, Religion, and Culture, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

Allen, A., "Treating West Indians" in *Clinical Guidelines in Cross-Cultural Mental Health*, Comas-Diaz, L., Griffith, E., (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1988), pp. 305-333.

Allen, A., "Whole Person Healing, Spiritual Realism and Social Disintegration" *International Review of Mission* (Geneva) XC, 356/357 (2001), pp. 118-133.

Allen, A., "The Mission of the Church in a Post-Modern Jamaica" in *The Daily Observer* (Kingston: Jamaica, May 2, 2001), p. 7.

Alleyne, M., *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1988).

Althaus-Reid, M., *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (New York: Routledge 2000).

Anderson, H., *The Family and Pastoral Care,* Theology and Pastoral Care, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

Anderson, H., and **Foley, E.,** *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998).

Anderson, K., Browning, D., and **Boyer, B.,** Eds. *Marriage Just a Piece of Paper?* Religion, Marriage, and Family (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002).

Anderson, R., and **Guernsey, D.,** *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985).

Anselm, Corbin and **Strauss,** *Basics of Qualitative Research,* Second Edition, (London: Sage Publishers, 1998).

Armstrong, J., and **Lichtenstein, J.,** *Violence and Urban Poverty in Jamaica: Breaking the Cycle* (Kingston: Jamaica, Unpublished Report, 1996).

Ayres, R., Ed. *Development Studies: An Introduction through Selected Readings* (Dartford: Greenwich University Press, 1995).

Bailey, W., et al. "Parenting and Socialisation in Caribbean Family Systems" *Caribbean Dialogue* (Cave Hill, Barbados) 4, 1 (1998), pp.21-28.

Bailey, W., et al. *Family and the Quality of Gender Relations in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Mona, ISER, 1998).

Baker-Fletcher, K., "Womanism, Afro-Centrism and the Reconstruction of Black Womanhood," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, 22, 2 (1995), pp. 183-197.

Ballard, P., "Can Theology be Practical?" in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context*, Williows, D.; Swinton, J., (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), pp. 27-35.

Ballard, P., Ed. *The Foundations of Pastoral Studies* (Cardiff: The Board of Studies for Pastoral Studies, The Faculty of Theology, University College, 1986).

Ballard, P., and **Pritchard, J.,** *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996).

Balswick, J., and **Ward, D.,** "The Challenge of Modernity for the Family: False Hopes and Opportunities" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 254-269.

Balswick, J., "Toward a Practical Theology of Marital Sexuality" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 285-296.

Barrett, R., "Marriage and the Ministry in the Caribbean" in *With Eyes Wide Open*, Mitchell, D., 172-181.

Barrow, C., "Men, Women and the Family in the Caribbean: A Review" Chap. in *Caribbean Sociology: Introductory Readings* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001), pp. 418-426.

Barrow, C., *Family in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996).

Barrow, C., "Finding the Support: Strategies for Survival." *Social and Economic Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 32, 2 (1986), pp.131-172.

Barrow, C., and **Reddock, R.,** Eds. *Caribbean Sociology: Introductory Readings* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001).

Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics*. 1.1 vols. Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1975.

Barton, S., Ed. *The Family in Theological Perspective*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1996.

Beckford, G., and **Witter., M.,** *Small Garden, Bitter Weed: The Political Economy of Struggle and Change in Jamaica* (London: Zed Press, 1982).

Beckford, R., *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (London: Dartmore, Longman and Todd 1998).

Bennett, A., "Overcoming the Biblical and Traditional Subordination of Women" in *Feminist Theological Ethics,* Daly, L., (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1994), pp.135-144.

Bernardes, J., *Family Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Bisnauth, D., "Biblical Roots of Liberation Theology" Chap. in *Looking at the Theology of Liberation Together: An Ecumenical Reflection within the Caribbean,* (Kingston, Jamaica: Jamaica Council of Churches, 1991), pp. 1-12.

Boesak, A., *Black Theology: Black Power* (Oxford: Mowbray, 1978).

Boff, L., and **Boff, C.,** "Introducing Liberation Theology" Chap. in *Liberation and Theology,* (London: Burns and Oats, 1987), p. 32.

Bolland, N., *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001).

Boodoo, G., "In Response to Adolfo Ham (1)" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing For the Challenges Ahead,* Gregory, H. (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press University of the West Indies, 1995), pp. 7-16.

Boothe, H., "A Theological Journey for an Emancipatory Theology." *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 17, 1 (1996), pp.15-21.

Brenner, A., Ed. *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

Brister, C., *Pastoral Care in the Church* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

Brodber, E., *A Study of Yards in the City of Kingston,* Working Papers (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1975).

Brown, J., and **Chevannes, B.,** *Why Man Stay So* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1998).

Browne, J., "Theology and Literary Criticism in the Womanist Mode: An Interdisciplinary (and Necessary) Conversation," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center,* 22, 2 (1995), pp. 115-128.

Browning, D., "Mapping the Terrain of Pastoral Theology: Towards a Practical Theology of Care" *Pastoral Psychology* 36, 1 (1987), pp.10-27.

Browning, D., *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

Browning, D., Ed. *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

Browning, D., "The Idea of the International Academy of Practical Theology." In *Practical Theology: International Perspectives*, Schweitzer, F., Ven, J., (New York: P. Lang, 1999), pp. 157-164.

Browning, D., et al. *From Cultural Wars to Common Ground*, Second Edition (Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000).

Brueggemann, W., Parkes, S., and **Groome, T.,** *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

Bryan, P., *Inside Out and Outside In: Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 2000).

Burns, R., *Introduction to Research Methods* (London: Sage, 2000).

CARICOM Health and Family Life Education Pamphlet - *A Guide to Health and Family Life Education for Principals and Teachers* (Barbados: UNICEF, 1999).

Cahill, L., *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics* New Studies in Christian Ethics, Gill, R., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Cahill, L., and **Mieth, D.,** "The Family (Editorial)" *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp. vii-x.

Cameron, S., and **Ricketts, H.,** *Changing the Future for Jamaica's Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1999).

Campanini, G., "Change in the Family and the Challenges of Contemporary Culture" *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp.37-42.

Campbell, A., *Rediscovering Pastoral Care* (London: Longman and Todd, 1981).

Campbell, A., *Paid to Care?* (London: SPCK, 1985).

Campbell, A., Ed. *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care* (London: SPCK, 1987).

Campbell, A., "Is Practical Theology Possible? " *Scottish Journal of Theology* (Edinburgh, Scotland) 25 (1972), pp.217-227.

Carr, W., *Handbook of Pastoral Studies* (London: SPCK, 1997).

Castele, H., Ed. *World Development, An Introductory Reader* (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1971).

Catholic Encyclopaedia "Intuition" http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08082b.htm.

Chaplain, J., "Counselling and Gender" in Palmer, S., and McMahon G., *Handbook of Counselling* Second Edition (London: Routledge 1997), pp 269-284.

Chevannes, B., "Sexual Behaviour of Jamaicans: A Literature Review" *Social and Economic Studies 42:1* (Kingston, Jamaica: 1993), pp. 1-45.

Chevannes, B., "Stresses and Strains: Situational Analysis of the Caribbean Family" (Unpublished Paper for ECLAC, 1994).

Chevannes, B., *What We Sow and What We Reap*, Grace Kennedy Lectures (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1999).

Chevannes, B., "Our Caribbean Reality (2)" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H., (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 65-71.

Chevannes, B., *Learning to Be a Man* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001).

Church of England, *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society*, (London: Church House Publishing, 1995).

Church of Scotland, "Report on the Theology of Marriage." *Report to the General Assembly of The Panel of Doctrine*, (Edinburgh, Scotland, Church of Scotland. 1994).

Clarke, E., *My Mother Who Fathered Me,* Second Edition (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1999).

Clebsch, W., and **Jaekle, C.,** *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

Clinebell, H., *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling* (Nashville, USA: Abingdon Press, 1984).

Collins, P., *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

Cone, J. H., *God of the Oppressed* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

Cooper, C., *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture*, Warwick University Caribbean Studies, Hennessy, A., (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1993).

Craton, M., "Changing Patterns of Slave Families in the British West Indies" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* X, 1 (1979), pp. 1-35.

Crawford-Brown, C., Who *Will Save Our Children?* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1999).

Cumper, G., "The Jamaican Family: Village and Estate" *Social and Economic Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 7 (1958).

Davenport, W., "Family System of Jamaica" *Social and Economic Studies 10:4* (Kingston, Jamaica) 10, 4 (1961), pp.420-454.

Davis, K., *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1990).

Davis, K., "Two Caribbean Theologies of Freedom," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* (New Jersey) 14, 1 (1993), pp. 36-54.

Dayfoot, A., *The Shaping of the West Indian Church 1492-1962* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1999).

Delmar, R., "What Is Feminism." in *What Is Feminism*, Mitchell, J.; Oakley, A., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), pp. 8-33.

Development Options "Community Profile" Kingston, Jamaica, Development Options. 2000.

Dirks, R., and **Kerns, V.,** "Mating Patterns and Adaptive Change in Rum Bay, 1923-1970," *Social and Economic Studies* (Kingston Jamaica) 25, 1 (1976), pp.34-54.

Douglas, K. B., "A Womanist Looks at the Future Direction of Theological Discourse," *Anglican Theological Review,* 76, 2 (1994), pp. 225-231.

Dunn, H., *Globalisation, Communication and Caribbean Identity* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995).

Dunn, J., "The Household Rules in the New Testament" in *The Family in Theological Perspective* Barton, S., Ed. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1996), pp. 43-63.

Dussel, E., "The Family in the Peripheral World" *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp.53-65.

Dyson, A., "Pastoral Theology: Towards a New Discipline" in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context*, Williows, D., Swinton, J., (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), pp. 19-26.

Edgar, A., "Common Law Unions and Church Membership," *Caribbean Challenge* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1994), pp.12-13.

Edie, C., "From Manley to Seaga" *Social and Economic Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 38, 1 (1989), pp.1-35.

Ellacuria, I., and **Sobrino, J.,** Eds. *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1993).

Erskine, N., *Decolonising Theology: A Caribbean Perspective* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1981).

Erskine, E., "The Church and Black People in the Caribbean," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center,* 19, 1 (1991/1992), pp. 1-24.

Eugene, T. M., "If You Get There Before I Do: A Womanist Ethical Response to Sexual Violence and Abuse," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, 22, 2 (1995), pp. 91-113.

Evans, H., *Gender and Achievement in Secondary Education in Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1999).

Farley, E., "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm" in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World*, Browning, D., (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 21-41.

Ferm, D., Ed. *Third World Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1986).

Fowler, J., "The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology," (Conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995).

Fowler, J., "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences" in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives*, Schweitzer, F., Ven, J., (New York: P. Lang, 1999), pp. 291-305.

Garland, D. E., and **Garland, D. R.,** "The Family: Biblical and Theological Perspectives" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidall, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 226-240.

Gerkin, C., *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville, USA: Abingdon Press, 1997).

Gordon, E., "Emancipatory Theology: (A Theological Journey) Gospel and Culture" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 17, 1 (1996), pp. 22-37.

Gordon, S., *Our Cause For His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1998).

Gottwald, N., *The Hebrew Bible in its Social World and in Ours* (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993).

Government of Jamaica, *Five-Year National Plan of Action for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children 1996-2002* (Kingston, Jamaica: United Nations Children Fund, 1996).

Green, L., *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book* (London: Mowbray, 1990).

Gregory, H., "Paternity and Identity in Jamaica: An Eriksonian Perspective" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Jamaica) 6, 1 (1985), pp.1-28.

Gregory, H., Ed. *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995).

Guernsey, D., "Family Ministry and a Theology of the Family: A Personal Journey" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidel, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 218-225.

Gutierrez, G., *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM Press, 1983).

Hall, B., "Is Common-Law Union Concubinage." *Caribbean Challenge* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1994), p.14.

Ham, A., "A Dialogue Between the Theology of Liberation and the Caribbean Black Theology" Chap. in *Looking at the Theology of Liberation Together: An Ecumenical Reflection within the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Jamaica Council of Churches, 1991), pp. 35-46.

Ham, A., "Caribbean Theology: The Challenge of the Twenty-First Century" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H., (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 1-6.

Hamid, I., *In Search of New Perspectives* Study Paper for the Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development (Barbados: CADEC, 1971).

Hamid, I., "Theology and Caribbean Development," in *With Eyes Wide Open*, Mitchell, D., (Barbados: CADEC, 1973), pp. 120-133.

Hartley, S., "Illegitimacy in Jamaica" in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, Laslett, P.; Oosterveen, K.; Smith, R., (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1980), pp. 379-396.

Harvey, A., "Marriage, Sex and the Bible (I)" *Theology* XCVI, 773 (1993), pp.364-372.

Harvey, A., "Marriage, Sex and the Bible (II)" *Theology* XCVI, 774 (1993), pp.460-468.

Hauerwas, S., *A Community of Character: Towards a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Indiana, USA: University of Notre Dam Press, 1981).

Haynes, L., *Fambli: The Church's Responsibility to the Family in the Caribbean* (Conference Proceedings, 1972).

Heitink, G., *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains, Manual For Practical Theology*, Studies in Practical Theology (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).

Henriques, F., *Family and Colour in Jamaica* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953).

Herskovits, M., and Herskovits, F., *Trinidad Village*, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1947).

Herskovits, M., Myth *of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

Hiebert, F., and **Hiebert, P.,** "The Whole Image of God: A Theology and Anthropological Understanding of Male-Female Relationship" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 270-284.

Higman, B., "Household Structure and Fertility on Jamaican Slave Plantations: A Nineteenth Century Example" *Population Studies* 27, 3 (1973), pp. 527-550.

Hiltner, S., "The Meaning and Importance of Pastoral Theology," Chap. in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 27-48.

Hiltner, S., *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958).

Hopkins, D., "A Black Theology of Liberation: The Slaves' Self-Creation," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center,* 20, 1 (1992/1993), pp. 22-41.

Houdijk, R., "Forms of Cohabitation and Procreation Outside Marriage" (Translated by J. Bowden) *Concilium* (London) 4 (1995), pp.18-25.

Hunsinger, D. v., *Theology and Pastoral Counselling* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995).

Jeffrey, A., "The Churches and the Development of Caribbean Family Life," in *With Eyes Wide Open*, Mitchell, D., pp 182-184.

Jennings, S., "Caribbean Theology or Theologies of the Caribbean" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 8, 2 (1987), pp.1-9.

Jennings, S., "The Word in Context: The Essential Criterion for Doing and Reflecting Authentic Caribbean Theology," *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 9, 1 (1988), pp.1-12.

Jennings, S., "Towards A Better Understanding of a More Gospel-Centred Response To Common-Law Relationships," Unpublished Paper, 2000.

Jones, L., *The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal*, Grace Kennedy Lectures, (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1995).

Jones, S., and **Butman, R.,** Modern *Psychotherapies* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991).

Jung, C. G., *Jung's Collected Works* Vol. 9. Part 1, Second Edition, (Princeton University Press, 1968).

Kerr, J., "Report of the National Committee on Political Tribalism." http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/politics/index.html: Gleaner.

Kreuger, R., *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (London: Sage, 1994).

Landman, J., et al. "Child Rearing Practices in Kingston, Jamaica" *Caribbean Quarterly* (Kingston, Jamaica) 29, 3 and 4 (1983), pp.40-52.

Lartey, E., *Pastoral Counselling in Inter-Cultural Perspective* Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1987).

Lartey, E., "Practical Theology as a Theological Form" in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context*, Williows, D.; Swinton, J., (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), pp. 72-77.

Lartey, E., *In Living Colour: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling* (London: Cassell, 1997).

Lazarus-Black, M., "My Mother Never Fathered Me: Rethinking Kinship and the Governing of Families" in *Caribbean Sociology: Introductory Readings*, Barrow, C., Reddock, R., (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001), pp. 389-402.

Le Tisser, L., "The Pastoral Relationship between Church and Co-habitees" *Theology* XCVI, 774 (1993), pp.468-476.

LeFranc, E., et al. "Family Community Relations: Social Institutions Under Threat" *Caribbean Journal,* 4, 1 (1998), p. viii.

LeFranc, E., et al. "The Family Unit An Elusive Dream?" *Caribbean Dialogue,* (Trinidad) 4, 1 (1998), pp.1-9.

LeFranc, E., et al. "Gender Role Definition and Identity: The Centrality of Primordial Values" *Caribbean Dialogue,* (Trinidad) 4, 1 (1998), pp.11-19.

LeFranc, E., et al. "The Meaning of Sexual Partnerships: Re-examining the Jamaican Family System," *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* (Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1994), pp. 17-30.

Lee, C., "Toward an Integrative Theology of Parent-Child Interaction" in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family*, Kettler, C.; Speidell, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), pp. 297-315.

Leo-Rhynie, E., *The Jamaican Family: Continuity and Change*, Grace Kennedy Lecture (Kingston, Jamaica: Grace Kennedy Foundation, 1993).

Lowe Ching, T., "Latin American Theological Method and its Relevance to Caribbean Theology" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), pp.4-28.

Lowe-Ching, T., "Method in Caribbean Theology" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H., (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 23-33.

Lyall, D., *Integrity of Pastoral Care,* New Library of Pastoral Care (London: SPCK, 2001).

Lyall, D., "Pastoral Action and Theological Reflection" in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context*, Williow, D.; Swinton, J., (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), pp. 53-58.

Lyall, D., *Counselling in the Pastoral and Spiritual Context* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995).

Lyon, K. B., and **Smith, A. J.,** Ed. *Tending the Flock: Congregations and Family Ministry,* The Family, Religion, and Culture, (Louisville, (Kentucky, USA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

McCormack, M., *Liberation or Development: The Role of the Church in the New Caribbean.* Study Papers for the Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development. (Barbados: CADEC, 1971).

McLeod, J., *An Introduction to Counselling* Second Edition (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998).

Messiah, J., "Women Who Head Households," *Women and the Family*, (Cave Hill, Barbados ISER, Women in the Caribbean Project, Vol. 2, 1982), p. 62.

Miller, E., "The Rise of Matriarchy in the Caribbean," *Caribbean Quarterly* 34, 3-4 (1988), pp.1-21.

Miller, E., *Men at Risk* (Kingston: Jamaica, Jamaica Publishing House 1991).

Miller-McLemore, B., "How Sexuality and Relationships have Revolutionized Pastoral Theology," Chap. in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 233-247.

Ministry of Education, *Health and Family Life Education Curriculum Grades 7-9* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1998).

Ministry of Education and Culture, *A Statement of National Policy for Health and Family Life Education* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1999).

Ministry of Education and Culture, *Health and Family Life Education: Scope and Sequence Grades 1 to 6* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1998).

Ministry of Education and Culture, *Health and Family Life Education Curriculum Grades 7-9* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1998).

Mitchell, J., and **Oakley, A.,** Ed. *What is Feminism?* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

Morgan, P., *Marriage-Lite: The Rise of Cohabitation and its Consequences*. London: (Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2000).

Muncie, J. et al., Eds. *Understanding the Family* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

Murdock, G., *Social Structure* (New York: Macmillan, 1949).

Musharhamina, M., *Traditional African Marriage and Christian Marriage* (Uganda, Africa: St. Paul Publication, 1981).

Neuman, L., *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches,* Third Ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997).

O'Donnell M., "The Family and Community" Chap. in A *New Introduction to Sociology,* Second Ed. (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1987), pp. 57-92.

O'Donnell M., "Self, Socialisation and Culture" Chap. in *A New Introduction to Sociology,* Second Ed. (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1987), pp. 45-56.

Oglesby, E. H., "Cutting the Cheese a Different Way: Ethics, Hermeneutics and the Black Experience," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, 19, 1 (1991/1992), pp. 88-101.

Oliveros, R., "History of the Theology of Liberation" in *Mysterium Liberationis*, Ellacuria, I.; Sobrino, J., (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 3-32.

Osiek, C., "The New Testament and the Family" *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp.1-9.

Osiek, C., and **Balch, D.,** *Families in the New Testament World.* The Family, Religion, and Culture, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

Panton, V., *The Church and Common- Law Union* (Kingston, Jamaica: Author, 1992).

Pateman, C., "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *Public and Private In Social Life*, Benn, S., Gaus, G., (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 281303.

Patterson, O., *The Sociology of Slavery* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1967).

Pattison, S., *A Critique of Pastoral Care* (London: SCM Press, 1988).

Pattison, S., and **Lynch, G.,** Counselling goes to Church: Aspects of the Pastoral in *Narrative Constructionist Counselling and Psychotherapy*, McLeod, J., Contact 137, 2002.

Pattison, S., and **Woodward, J.,** "An Introduction to Pastoral and Practical Theology." Chap. in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 1-19.

Pattison, S., and **Woodward, J.,** Eds. *The Blackwell Reader In Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

Patton, J., *Pastoral Care in Context* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993). Persaud, W., "Caribbean Response to the Globalisation of Theological Education" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H., (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 35-49.

Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Situational Analysis of Women and Children in Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: UNICEF, 1995).

Planning Institute of Jamaica, *A National Policy on Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2001).

Planning Institute of Jamaica, *National Plan of Action: Goals for Jamaican Children to the Year 2000* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995).

Planning Institute of Jamaica, Draft Policy Paper - *National Policy on Children: A Paper for Discussion,* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995).

Planning Institute of Jamaica, *National Plan of Action on Population and Development 1995-2015* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995).

Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Statement of the National Population Policy Jamaica (Revised)* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995).

Poling, J. N., and **Miller, D.,** Foundations *for a Practical Theology of Ministry* (Nashville, USA: Abingdon Press, 1985).

Post, S., *More Lasting Unions: Christianity, The Family and Society*. Religion, Marriage and Family, Browning, D.; Wall, J., (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000).

Powell, D., "Caribbean Women and their Response to Familial Experiences" *Social and Economic Studies 35:2* 32, 2 (1986), pp.83-129.

Rapley, J., "The Family and Development" *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica, April 19, 2001).

Redwood, S., *Pastoral Care in a Market Economy: A Caribbean Perspective* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1999).

Reid, B., "Tainos Not Arawaks: The Indigenous Peoples of Jamaica and the Greater Antilles" *Caribbean Geography* (Kingston, Jamaica) 5, 1 (1994), pp.67-71.

Reid, C., "The History of the Family" *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp.10-17.

Roberts, G., and **Sinclair, S.,** *Women In Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction and Family* The Caribbean: Historical and Cultural Perspectives, Hill, R., (Millwood New York: Kraus -Thomson Organisation Press, 1978).

Roberts, J. D., *Black Theology in Dialogue* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987).

Roberts, J.D., *Black Theology Today: Liberation and Contextualization*, Toronto Studies in Theology (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983).

Robson, C., *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner Researchers* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).

Rogers, C., and **Steven, B.,** *Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human* (London: Souvenir Press, 1973).

Rogerson, J., "The Family and Structures of Grace in the Old Testament" in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, Barton, S., (Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1996), pp. 25-42.

Rogerson, J., *Genesis 1-11*. Old Testament Guides, Whybray, R., (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

Rose, T., "Emerging Social Problems in Jamaica and their Pastoral Implications" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 6, 1 (1985), pp.29-42.

Rubenstein, H., "Conjugal Behaviour and Parental Role Flexibility in an Afro-Caribbean Village," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17, 4 (1980), pp 330-337.

Ruether, R., *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family* (London: SCM Press, 2001).

Russell, H., *Emancipation - Lessons and the Legacy: Family and Community - The Ideal and the Reality* (Kingston, Jamaica: Emancipation Commemoration Committee, 1996).

Samms -Vaughan, M., *Cognition, Educational Attainment and Behaviour in a Cohort of Jamaican Children* (Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2000).

Sanders, C., *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Pathway to African American Social Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

Sarah, E., "The Biblical Account of the First Woman: A Jewish Feminist Perspective" Chap. in *Women's Voices: Essays in Contemporary Feminist Theology* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1992), pp. 45-56.

Sarantakos, S., *Social Research* (Australia: Charles Stuart University, 1993).

Schweitzer, F., "Practical Theology, Contemporary Culture, and the Social Sciences-Interdisciplinary Relationships and the Unity of Practical Theology as a Discipline" Chap. in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), pp. 307-321.

Schweitzer, F., and **Ven, J.,** Eds. *Practical Theology: International Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1999).

Segundo, J. L., *The Liberation of Theology* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Limited, 1977).

Senior, O., *Working Miracles: Women's Lives in the English Speaking Caribbean* (Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991).

Skinner, G., and **Allan, C.,** Eds. *Handbook for Research Students in the Social Sciences* (London: Falmer, 1991).

Smedes, L., "The Family Commitment" Chap. in *Incarnatinal Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society and Family,* Kettler, C.; Speidell, T., (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard 1990), pp. 241-253.

Smith, A., *Emerging from Innocence* (Mandeville, Jamaica: Eureka Press, 1991).

Smith, M., *West Indian Family Structure* (Seattle, USA: University of Washington Press, 1962).

Smith, M., "Some Aspects of Social Structure in British Caribbean about 1820," *Social and Economic Studies* 1, 4 (1953), pp.55-79.

Smith, W., *The Church in the Life of the Black Family*, Judson Family Life Series, Chartier, J., and Chartier, M., Eds. (Valley Forge P.A.: Judson Press, 1985).

Social Development Commission, "Community Profile," (Kingston, Jamaica: Research and Documentation Unit, Social Development Commission. 1999).

Springer, J., "West Indian Value System and The Church's Validating Role" in *Troubling of the Waters*, Hamid, I., (San Fernando, Trinidad: Rahaman Printery Limited, 1973), pp. 125-138.

Stone, C., "Values, Norms and Personality Development," (Unpublished Paper, Kingston, Jamaica, March 1992).

Taylor, B., "Editorial." *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (UTCWI, Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), pp.1-2.

Taylor, B., "In Search of a Pastoral Ministry Practice: The Case of Stable Non-Legal Unions," (Unpublished Paper, 2001).

Thatcher, A., *Liberating Sex: A Christian Sexual Theology* (London: SPCK, 1993).

Thomas, D., "Confronting Suicidal Propensity among Jamaican Teenagers" D. Min Thesis, (United Theological College of the West Indies, 1998).

Tillich, P., "The Theology of Pastoral Care" *Pastoral Psychology* (October 1929), pp.21-26.

Titus, N., "Our Caribbean Reality (1)" in *Caribbean Theology: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*, Gregory, H., (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1995), pp. 25-64.

Townes, E., *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

Tracy, D., "The Foundations of Practical Theology" in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World*, Browning, D., (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 61-81.

Tracy, D., *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981).

Turner, M., *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1998).

Ven, J., "Practical Theology: From Applied to Empirical Theology" *Journal of Empirical Theology* 1, 1 (1988), pp.7-25.

Ven, J., *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993).

Vidal, M., "Family Values and Ideals," *Concilium* (London), 4 (1995), pp.110-119.

Waithe, N., *Caribbean Sexuality* (Bethlehem PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1993).

Waithe, N., *Family Relationships* (Bethlehem PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1995).

Watty, W., *From Shore to Shore* (Kingston, Jamaica: Cedar Press, 1981).

Wilcox, W., "For the Sake of the Children? Family-Related Discourse in the Mainline," (Unpublished, 2000).

Williams, D., "Womanist Theology: Black Voices" *Christianity and Crisis*, (1987).

Williams, L., "What, Why and Wherefore of Caribbean Theology" *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* (Kingston, Jamaica) 12, 1 (1991), pp.29-40.

Williams, L., *Caribbean Theology,* Research in Religion and Family: Black Perspectives, Erskine, N., (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

Wilmore, G. and Cone, J. H., Ed. *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

Wright, F., *Pastoral Care for Lay People* (London: SCM Press, 1982).

Young, V., "Household Structure in West Indian Society" *Social and Economic Studies* 39, 3 (1990), pp.147-179.